

Dear Senator Floyd Prozanski & Senator Kim Thatcher Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee:
Thank you for allowing me to present testimony in reference to Senate Bill 978. As an avid sportsman, CHL holder, participant in competitive shooting sports, and lifelong Oregonian I ask that you vote “no” to proceed with SB 978 and its associated amendments.

Please use logic and reason to focus on four (4) key consequences of this bill:

1. SB 978 will place undue burden on law-abiding citizens, turning many of these non-offenders into felons, and removing the existing Constitutional rights of our citizens. Examples:
 - Young adults, old enough to serve in the military and old enough to vote, will no longer be allowed to defend themselves and their families. (and curiously at a time when Oregon legislators are considering lowering the voting age to 16, but RAISING the age to own a firearm? See the irony there? “You are old enough to exercise one Constitutional right, but not another...”)
 - Gun stores will be allowed to exercise age discrimination against these adults. (Not to be confused with barring sales to minors, as this concerns legal adults. The “age of majority” in Oregon is 18.)
 - Responsible firearms owners will be held liable for actions of criminals who steal locked firearms. (Will you do the same for car owners whose stolen vehicles are used to commit crimes?)
 - Low-income CHL holders will no longer be able to afford license fees, another form of discrimination. This removes their right of self-defense.
2. SB 978 does not execute the primary responsibility of the Oregon legislature: Ensuring the protection and safety of Oregonians. All of the focus of SB 978 is on law-abiding citizens, not on criminals who use firearms illegally. Recent studies by the US Department of Justice shed new light on how criminals acquire firearms. SB 978 neither prevents criminals from obtaining/using firearms, nor does it enforce existing laws in place to punish criminal access of firearms. Instead, it will create a new class of felons overnight...peaceful Oregonians who are legal gun owners. I submit two charts from the recent DOJ study:

FIGURE 1
Percent of all state and federal prisoners who had possessed or used a firearm during their offense, 2016

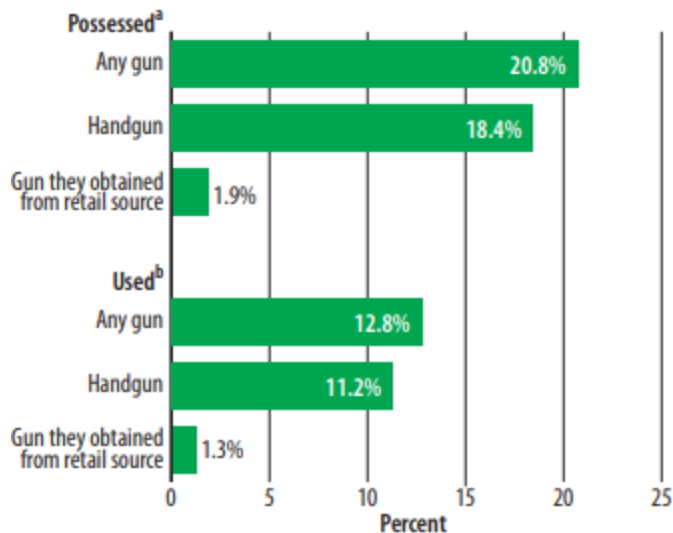


TABLE 5
Among state and federal prisoners who had possessed a firearm during the offense for which they were serving time, sources and methods used to obtain a firearm, 2016

Source and method to obtain firearm	All prisoners	State	Federal
Purchased/traded at retail source	10.1%	9.7%	13.7%
Gun shop/store	7.5	7.2	9.6
Pawn shop	1.6	1.5	2.2
Flea market	0.4	:	:
Gun show	0.8	0.8	1.4
Obtained from individual	25.3%	26.0%	20.5%
Purchased/traded from family/friend	8.0	7.9	9.1
Rented/borrowed from family/friend	6.5	7.0	3.0
Gift/purchased for prisoner	10.8	11.2	8.4
Off the street/underground market^a	43.2%	43.2%	42.9%
Theft^b	6.4%	6.6%	4.7%
From burglary	1.5	1.5	:
From retail source	0.2	:	:
From family/friend	1.6	1.8	:
Unspecified theft ^c	3.1	3.3	1.8
Other source	17.4%	17.1%	20.1%
Found at location of crime/victim	6.9	6.7	7.9
Brought by someone else	4.6	4.7	3.6
Other ^d	5.9	5.6	8.5
Multiple sources^e	2.5%	2.6%	2.0%
Estimated number of prisoners who possessed a firearm, excluding prisoners who did not report source^f	256,400	227,100	29,300

Source: US DOJ 2016 Survey of Prison Inmates <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/suficspi16.pdf>

3. SB 978 will violate the 2nd Amendment of the US Constitution as well as Article 1, Section 27 of the State of Oregon Constitution, generating volumes of law suits that Oregon can ill-afford to defend. The “shall not be infringed” clause in particular provides clear legal standings to plaintiffs in their assured law suits. I posit that Oregon can ill-afford drawn-out multi-year battles. Instead, focus our tax dollars on activities that will have more impact on reducing crime and deaths involving

firearms: mental health care, drug interdiction, and enforcement of existing firearms laws. Be heroes for all Oregonians, not villains to law-abiding firearms owners.

4. Finally, and most importantly, SB 978 does not address the most critical factor that is at the root of current tragedies: mental health. We all want to end the violence of suicide and school shootings. It is your duty as legislators to focus on the cause, not the tool. Instead of damning peaceful Oregonians, put more funding into anti-bullying programs. Instead of removing rights to self-defense, prevent access to video games that numb our children to violence. Instead of following the anti-gun mob, LEAD with innovative legislation to eliminate depression and mental illness.

We as voters have entrusted to you the key responsibilities of governing for ALL, making legal decisions, allocating scarce budget resources where they will do the most good, and protecting our rights. Please exercise your responsibilities and vote down Senate Bill 978.

Sincerely,

Kurt Bonnema

Beaverton, Oregon