

In regards to SB 978:

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee,

My name is Nicole Chaisson, a current resident of The Dalles. I strongly urge you to vote NO on SB 978.

While I have issue with almost all parts of SB 978 and its amendments, I wish to share a few key points for your consideration:

1) So called "safe-storage" laws are ineffective in preventing crime and may result in harm to law-abiding gun owners.

- While safes, cable locks, etc. may aid a responsible gun owner in preventing a child from obtaining a firearm, they do little or nothing to obstruct a criminal from obtaining the firearm.

- Low cost storage methods such as cable locks and handgun safes simply do not have the structural integrity to resist attacks from common tools.

- High quality gun safes are prohibitively expensive (i.e. thousands of dollars) and are still vulnerable to physical attacks by easily obtainable power saws and drills. While these safes may deter the common criminal, they are most likely found in more expensive homes that would benefit more from external security measures such as cameras and alarm systems. Should a criminal gain access to a high quality safe, they are likely prepared with the knowledge and equipment for the task of breaking into it.

- Most locks, including those on high quality safes, are easily defeated. Model-specific procedures for gaining access to virtually any safe storage device are detailed online. Even amateurs can use video instructions to quickly bypass the best of these devices.

- "Quick-access" storage methods, such as safes with finger-print readers or digital keypads, are inherently flawed as they require a charged battery to operate. If the battery is dead, there is no way to get into the safe in a short amount of time.

- Safes that require a combination to unlock (either digital or tumbler-style) are flawed as they require the owner to remember the combination. This can be difficult for anyone in a high-stress situation, but may be additionally challenging for those in our community with memory-related difficulties (e.g. the elderly, Alzheimer's patients, those with certain mental disabilities or head injuries, etc.).

- With exception to very large/heavy safes and safes that are well secured (e.g. bolted) to a structure, a criminal can simply steal the entire safe, removing the need to actually access the safe's contents at the time of theft.

2) Banning CHL holders from public areas (e.g. public transportation, airport grounds, the Capital Building, etc.) does nothing from preventing firearm-related crimes in these areas and only hinders law-abiding citizens.

- Criminals will not care about gun restrictions in these areas, just as they have disregarded "Gun Free Zones" in the past. Advertising areas as "Gun Free Zones" only makes those areas targets for criminal activity and terrorist attacks.

- While this affects all CHL holders in obvious and drastic manners, it also systematically discriminates against CHL holders who must take public transportation due to disability, injury, or income level.

- A firearm is often the only effective way that persons with a physical disability or injury can defend themselves from attack. Removing their right to carry a firearm in public places either removes their defensibility or access to public areas deemed gun free zones.

- Barring CHL holders from carrying firearms in public areas will lead to an increase in those owners leaving firearms in automobiles instead of carrying them in the restricted area. Undoubtedly, leaving a firearm unattended in a vehicle is less secure and at a higher risk of theft than allowing the owner to keep the firearm on their body.

3) Holding the legal owner of a stolen firearm responsible for the actions of the thief is morally reprehensible. This aspect of the bill does nothing to prevent the theft of the gun or subsequent crimes committed with the gun and only punishes the victim of the theft.

4) Requiring serialization or registration of firearms is not an effective method of preventing gun violence.

- Registration only ties a firearm to its legal owner. This is useful in identifying the owner of retrieved stolen property, but does little more.

- Serial numbers are easily removed.

- Other “fingerprints” of an individual firearm (e.g. firing pin imprints on primer of a spent round) are notoriously unreliable in positively identifying the firearm during a forensic/ballistic investigation. In addition, the parts that are responsible for these “fingerprints” are easily and cheaply replaceable, negating the usefulness of any such record.

5) Much of the data in support of SB 978 is biased as it comes from either unsound studies or misrepresented statistics.

- As a career scientist, bias in statistical studies is something I am well-equipped to identify. Having read in detail numerous studies regarding gun violence, it is of my opinion that much of the published literature has serious flaws resulting in invalid conclusions.

- I implore you to pay close attention to any forms of bias in studies and statistics both in support and in opposition of this bill. I recommend seeking the judgement of politically unaffiliated scientists, engineers, statisticians, and the like when determining the validity of such literature for yourself – especially when dealing with topics as major as gun violence. Understanding the nature of the relevant scientific conclusions is essential to dealing with gun violence effectively. Passing legislation based on compromised statistics is likely to result in only more senseless deaths rather than saving lives.

Yours respectfully,

Nicole Chaisson