

I oppose the proposal to let businesses refuse service to 18 to 20-year-old adults because I oppose laws based in prejudice.

Yes, supporters of discrimination are correct on some points. Brains are not fully developed at 18. There are relevant physical characteristics that separate youths from other adults. And young people are disproportionately responsible for shootings and violent crime.

But there are other facts. Millions of 18 to 20-year-olds use guns responsibly. And decency forbids penalizing a group for the actions of a few.

True, the proposed law does not forbid selling guns to young adults. But the history of gun control teaches us that a current carefully negotiated compromise or modest first step is a stepping stone. Today's freedom is tomorrow's loophole. Anyone who doubts that should research #NoGunUntil21.

Consider the arrogance of this position. We tell young people that at 18 they can fight and die to defend us. We even compel men to register for potential mandatory duty. Yet all the while, we piously insist that they lack the mental development to defend *themselves*.

Lumping heroes in with offenders would mean that, in Oregon, a young disabled veteran has no more right to purchase a self-defense tool than a miscreant like the Parkland shooter, who mutilated animals, put guns to people's heads, and introduced himself as a school shooter.

War aside, this law tells the young mother whose AR-15 routed home invaders that she has no right to purchase guns before the age of 21. Her right to protect her infant is less precious, you see, than the right of merchants to discriminate against her.

We discriminate against her drinking, some will point out. And that's true. But access to alcohol is not an enumerated right. And how many infants do you suppose have been protected by beer?

Plainly put, this law codifies prejudice against a stereotyped group that lacks clout. Our preconceptions make it hard to see clearly. So let's consider another group.

Men make up a huge percentage of mass shooters, domestic abusers and violent criminals. And there are relevant, physical characteristics that separate them from other adults. Men have, on average, much more testosterone, a hormone associated with aggression and violence.

Why don't proponents of this bill push to allow discrimination against men? The logic is just as strong. The numbers are actually stronger.

Is there nothing to be done then? Yes, fortunately there is principled discrimination. But Oregon already has the tools to discriminate with integrity. The red flag law, flawed as its due process protections may be, allows judges to discriminate.

They can discriminate against those who openly aspire to be school shooters, against freakishly maladjusted, brain damaged anorexic mental patients like the Sandy Hook shooter, and against perpetrators of animal cruelty.

Judges can discriminate against those who threaten and harass the innocent. They can discriminate against people who are in crisis and lash out violently. They can discriminate against those who illegally brandish weapons. And they can do all of this without denying enumerated rights to millions of innocent, responsible adults.

I also oppose the law against lawful concealed carry in airports and on airport property, outside of secure zones.

It is hard to follow the logic of this proposal. Apparently, forbidding a vetted CCW permittee with no criminal record to carry will prevent mass shootings, armed robberies, kidnappings and assaults at airports.

Or maybe people who have decided to perpetrate these crimes will be deterred by the new rule. And yes, I know that we have laws against murder even though murderers will disobey them. But this is more like forbidding the innocent from possessing computers to stop hackers.

Even if this were a rational proposal, how does it address an emergency? Are there a lot of CCW permittees committing crimes at PDX Airport? Accidental discharges? Kidnappings? Rapes? Robberies? Mass shootings?

Political expediency is not an emergency. And it is certainly not worth charging someone with a crime punishable by a draconian penalty, especially when that crime is based on a law that took effect instantly and without fair notice.

True common sense is thinking carefully for yourself. True courage is resisting popular ideas that buckle under examination. I urge legislators to use their independent common sense and show real courage by voting against these proposals.

Sincerely,

Lawrence Thongs