

Honorable Committee Members:

I want to state, for the record, my objections to the provisions of HB 4005. First and foremost, this bill is demonstrably un-Constitutional. Section 27 of the Oregon Constitution provides in part, "...the people shall have the right to bear arms for the defense of themselves and the State..."

The 2nd Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, in part, "...the right of the people to keep and bear arms SHALL NOT BE INFRINGED." (Emphasis added). The term "Infringe" is defined by the Funk & Wagnalls dictionary as "... a violation of a right, privilege or regulation."

The language of HB 4005 is indeed an infringement; not only that, it demonizes a firearms owner for activities not of his/her own making. If a gun is stolen, the thief should be prosecuted, not the gun owner! Secondly, how will this bill be enforced? Will the State Police (at the Legislators' insistence) go door-to-door to insure guns are locked up? The bill also violates the rights of persons who are not twenty-one years of age. While underage, they are citizens as well, and many are involved in organized shooting programs.

I am a septuagenarian, and (I think) a decent person. I serve on two municipal committees, have lived in the same town and home for over 23 years, and have been a firearms collector and appraiser for at least 35 years. I have served as a city manager in two cities, and in my retirement serve on the Board of Directors for the Ashland Gun and Archery Club, where we do have youth shooting programs. I am the former President of the Medford Rifle and Pistol Club as well. My greatest violation of the law has been a speeding ticket a few years ago. I have taught all of my children (who are all adults now) to shoot, and my oldest grandchildren to do so as well... three of whom are serving or have served in the U.S. Military. I am also former military, serving in the U.S. Army from 1963 to 1969, and I am a veteran of the Vietnam conflict. This background has allowed me to become quite familiar with guns.... And come to the realization that guns are, simply, tools. Tools of a unique orientation, to be sure, but tools nonetheless.

I have been led to understand that this bill was originally stimulated by the mother of a teen who used a family firearm to commit suicide. My heart goes out to her, as I had a brother, a niece and a dear friend all commit suicide in the past few years. In all cases, desperation caused by potentially fatal illness was the stimulation for the act. The issue, however, is not the tool used in the suicide... it is the desperation of the perpetrator. My niece, for example, hanged herself. Again, guns are simply tools.

Human beings have used tools to maim and kill each other for millennia. We have used sharp sticks, rocks, axes, pikes, lances, battle axes, war clubs, knives (of all kinds) bows & arrows, swords, ropes, garrotes and guns. To develop a law that does nothing to deal with crime, is generally un-enforceable and negatively affects the firearm owner as a 'feel good' measure, is, frankly, not very bright. I would urge you to not present this bill to the full legislature for a vote.

Sincerely,

J. Michael LaNier
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