

Dear members of the House Committee on Judiciary:

As a law-abiding private citizen of Eagle Point, I am pleased to provide this testimony before the committee. I oppose HB 4005 and I wish to address its primary objective; reducing mass shootings committed with stolen firearms. Without a doubt, this is an issue that deeply concerns all Oregonians. However, this bill does nothing to address the penalties for gun theft or acts of violence with a firearm.

In contrast to focusing on gun thieves, this bill imposes numerous fines and potentially life-altering criminal charges upon the victim of the stolen firearm(s). The bill purports that theft is a significant source of criminal access to firearms and claims that they may be the next mass shooter. On this premise, I argue that the problem is a lack of severity with regard to the penalty for theft of a firearm. However, this bill provides a pathway to charge the victims of firearm theft as accomplices to mass shootings, and I do not believe that is the answer to the problem.

Ultimately, I hope that this committee will recognize HB 4005's flaws and reject the bill upon review of its text and citizen testimony. However, if you decide to advance this bill, I respectfully ask that you consider removing the gun theft victim's criminal liability as defined in Section 5(a). My second request for consideration is the penalty gun thieves face. In Oregon, theft of a firearm is only a class C felony, which comes with a maximum of 5 years in prison. If you agree with this legislation's assumption that gun thieves may be the next mass shooters, then I hope you would also agree that a class A felony for theft of a firearm with substantial minimum mandatory sentencing is appropriate. I also understand that increasing the length of sentencing is a burden on our prison system's capacity, but that argument only amplifies my point because the architects of this bill believe we have enough jail cells for lawful gun owners.

Thank you for your careful consideration of my comments. I hope we can agree that the real answer is to punish criminals. If we raise the stakes high enough, they may think twice before victimizing lawful gun owners and possibly other innocent Oregonians.

Blair Sundell-Bahrd
Eagle Point Resident