

Chair, Members of the House Rules Committee:

First, let me thank you for your service to the State of Oregon, to your communities. I was first introduced to the Legislative process, work of the Assembly, and the long hours that you work, your service and personal sacrifices, as a Intern with State Representative Dave Frohnmayer (R-Eugene). My first experience with legislation was going to State Representative Sam Johnson (R-Redmond), a gentleman I admire greatly. He loved Oregon and worked in a bi-partisan way.

We are writing because we support Senate Bill 554A, with amendments - 18, proposed by State Representative Brian Clem. What we witnessed, what we have experienced in our community necessitates updating Oregon statutes to allow localities the option to set standards for use and carry of firearms, weapons, semi-automatic guns in public buildings, in parks, school parks, and municipal properties.

In the summer of 2020, intoxicated individuals, small groups with arms, some with automatic weapons roamed Bush's Pasture Park, aggressively looking for confrontation, intimidation and, unfortunately, some playing music promoting killing persons of color.

This is not the Oregon we know. Families and children fleeing the park seeing men with weaponry. Neighbors inside their homes locking their doors and pulling the drapes in fear.

My father flew B-17s in WW II fighting the Nazis. My uncles fought in Burma-India-China, in the Pacific on cruisers, and the mountains of Italy, fighting regimes that used tactics and techniques of armed intimidation on local populations. They put forward life itself, their youth, all they had to combat regimes that fostered such fear and sanctioned such behavior, the Brown Shirts, of Hitler and Mussolini. I know my father, a naturally conservative man, raised in a rural area on a ranch, a man who worked with his hands and very long days, sometimes sunrise to sunset would never condone men in the town park, intoxicated, flashing semi-automatic weapons, putting fear into children and families, and into folks simply in a park to walk their dog.

State Representative Brian Clem is a reasonable moderate elected official. We trust his judgement. We trust his knowledge in bringing forward a local option to cities and counties, and wisdom to present legislation that will not repeat the intimidation in our City park that we saw.

We urge the adoption of SB 554A with -18 amendments.

Thank you.

Jon Christenson