

Testimony of Tom O'Connor
On SB 554
To House Committee on Rules
April 21, 2021

Chair Smith Warner, Vice-Chair Drazan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tom O'Connor. I am a life-long Oregon gun owner and resident of Clackamas County. I am strongly in support of both SB 554 and HB 2510.

Nothing in these bills would impair the use of firearms for hunting, target shooting, collecting or for self-defense in the home if necessary.

Firearms are not political statements or tools to stifle the free speech of others. They should never be used to intimidate or threaten our fellow citizens or those who are serving the public in their daily jobs. Local elected officials, school boards, and public universities should have the ability to regulate firearms in public buildings and grounds such as sports facilities.

I support the inclusion of safe storage provisions from HB 2510 into SB 554. All firearms should be stored securely when not in use. This advice is included in virtually all firearm instructional materials.

Some have argued that requiring a firearm to be stored securely would defeat the purpose of having it readily available for personal security. In fact, nothing could be further from the truth.

There are a wide variety of reasonably priced, secure storage devices readily available to a gun-owners that are specifically designed for quick access. At the same time, they can prevent children or unauthorized persons from obtaining the weapon. Quick access safes can be found at most sporting goods stores for as little as \$40 - \$50. Locking mechanisms can include simple four-digit codes or use biometric fingerprint readers. Keypads can be manual or electronic depending on owner preference. These types of safes can be opened in a matter of seconds.

As a gun owner, I believe that with rights come responsibilities. That is one of the main reasons that I support HB 2510. It is designed to incentivize personal responsibility with regard to gun ownership. The bill does not impose criminal penalties, as some have advocated. Instead, it says that if a gun owner does not responsibly store a firearm when not in use they are subject to a civil fine like a traffic

violation and subject to civil liability if someone is harmed as a result of that failure to secure.

I am a founding member of Gun Owners for Responsible Ownership. We believe that gun owners should take the lead to promote safe gun ownership and sensible laws and regulations to reduce gun violence. Of course, we can and should seek to teach safety to our children and youth, but ultimately the responsibility for safe gun ownership lies with us as gun owners, parents and grandparents. That is the approach taken in HB 2510.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I urge passage of SB 554 with the inclusion of the provisions of HB 2510.