

Dear House Rules Committee,

I am writing in strong support of SB 554-A20.

Under current Oregon law, those with a concealed handgun license are allowed to carry a loaded, hidden firearm into all public schools, colleges, local government buildings, airports, and even the Oregon Capitol building.

SB 554-A20 will make these types of public spaces safer for everyone. This bill gives local officials the ability to establish specific gun-free public spaces. It is crucial that our local officials have the ability to make important public safety decisions that work best in their own community.

Public schools and universities have been the site of several serious mass shootings. Safety at these public places would be increased by passage of SB554-A20 because law enforcement would be able to turn away persons attempting open carry in these public buildings. Local elected officials, school boards, and public universities should have the ability to regulate firearms in public buildings and grounds such as sports facilities.

As we learned on January 6, 2021, capital buildings are at unique risk for political violence. Firearms should never be used to intimidate or threaten our fellow citizens or those who are serving the public in their daily jobs. Courthouses already use airport style scanners. With this bill, metal scanners could be added to the Oregon State Capitol to discover concealed weapons.

Democracy does not work at the point of a gun.

Please help every Oregonian feel safer when expressing our opinions and going about our daily lives in the public spaces we all share by passing SB 554-A20.

Sincerely,  
Colette DeWitt