

Senate Bill 554 will make me a felon for possessing a firearm that I applied for and received a concealed handgun license to carry by creating a patchwork of laws and gun-free zones across the state. Walking through Portland State University Campus, participating in a Women's Rights rally on the State Capitol grounds, and driving a friend to the airport could all become illegal to do with a concealed carry license.

This creation of additional gun free zones is a "feel-good" political move that will make nobody safer. When a criminal wants to commit an act of violence, a sign saying "No Guns Allowed" will not stop them. Currently, those possessing a concealed handgun license are exempt from limitations on where they can carry concealed specifically because they have taken the time, money and effort to go through fingerprinting and extensive background checks to get a concealed carry license. People who conceal carry are not a group of people that commit violent crimes. They are the most law abiding group of citizens and studies have shown that those with concealed carry licenses commit crimes at a lesser rate than current and former police officers yet the police (current and former) are exempt from these new rules. This proposed law is unenforceable and will do nothing to protect people and will generate an illusion of safety that will create a patchwork of legal and illegal places in public that a person with a concealed handgun license may legally carry their firearm and be given an opportunity to defend themselves should the need arise.

Since police departments are being de-funded, citizens have to rely more and more on themselves for their own protection. In Portland alone, the Police Bureau's budget was cut by about \$27 \. The cuts include the elimination of the bureau's Gun Violence Reduction Team, its Transit Division and school resource officers. This is taking police off the streets and creating an absurd response time to those in need. According to an OregonLive article from November 2020, It currently takes an average of 10 minutes for police to respond to high priority emergencies. People are being left to fend for themselves in cities across the state that we live in an visit while at the same time being stripped of our abilities to defend ourselves and politicians that support these measures expect crime to go down as a result. To that end, this bill further wishes to deter poor citizens from obtaining a means to protect themselves by arbitrarily doubling the cost of a concealed carry license from \$50 to \$100 and renewals from \$50 to \$75. This bill is discriminatory against poor people to attempt to limit their ability to carry concealed.

This bill is a solution looking for a problem that does not exist and does nothing to address the actual violent crimes that are associated firearms and are causing harm through mostly gang related activity. Concealed Carry License holders are not the issue and this bill punishes them for no reason.

I strongly encourage you to think hard about what this bill negatively does to those licensed to carry concealed and how this bill will not prevent a single crime from occurring and instead replaces police and concealed carry citizens with signs that say "No Guns Allowed". The Oregon State Legislature is protected by police. I do not have the luxury of armed security to protect me wherever I go. Do not strip me of the ability to defend myself and oppose the passage of SB554.

Thank you,
Colin Rowles