

Good afternoon Chair Bynum, Vice Chairs Noble and Power, and members of the House Committee on Judiciary. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you concerning how Bill HB 2543 would impact me.

As you know, for the past several months Portland has suffered much violence and damage from riots and lawlessness. Those committing the violence have threatened to go out into the surrounding communities, and have done so a few times. I take their threats seriously.

I enjoy walking on a lovely neighborhood trail. I'm a friendly person and tend to greet fellow walkers, whom I consider neighbors. A couple years ago when walking this trail with my husband I made the mistake of greeting someone who returned my greeting with a look of such hatred that he appeared to prefer slitting my throat rather than return my greeting. I was very glad that my husband was with me, but I can't always rely on that.

As a petite woman, the only thing that levels the playing field for me against a man of 200+ pounds is a firearm. If this bill is passed and I decide to purchase a firearm for my safety, and train to responsibly carry for my protection, while waiting for approval of my background check, I would be vulnerable. Especially if this could take months, years, or get lost in the system like people's requests for unemployment checks this past year.

Criminals are now being released due to the spread of COVID, and although we are told that only the non-violent are being released, this is not true. The violent have been released and brutally attacked people. Even young teenagers have been recorded attacking the vulnerable. This law targets the law-abiding citizen, and does nothing to protect us.

If law enforcement is unable to keep up with increased demands for background checks because they are understaffed, increase their funding for more staff in order to solve the problem. Enable them to do their job. Do not try to take away the right of the law-abiding to protect ourselves while criminals go free.

You are elected to serve the people you represent, and pass laws that are just. This bill does neither. **Please vote NO on HB 2543.**