

Good Morning Chairman Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, distinguished Senators,
My name is Bennett Rowe and I am submitting this testimony "Opposing" Senate Bill SB554.

I have served my entire adult life in Law Enforcement to include positions as Police Lieutenant, Police Sergeant, detective, DEA task force officer and Firearms instructor. After retiring from Law Enforcement, I opened my own business instructing Oregonians and citizens from other states in the safe use, ownership and marksmanship of firearms, primarily handguns. Over 2700 students were trained and most applied for and received their concealed handgun licenses.

I have asked all of my students to stay in touch with me regarding their lawful need to use their firearm to save their life or the life of a loved one. Not one of these students has ever reported back to me, nor have I discovered their use otherwise of a single discharge of a firearm. The point here is to have the Senate understand our citizens have the ability to protect themselves from harm on a daily basis without causing a single unlawful incident.

We have tens of thousands of citizens who choose to exercise their constitutional right to keep and bear arms, yet the incidence of criminal misuse is nil. Twelve states including Alaska, Idaho, Wyoming, Vermont, Arizona have constitutional carry (no permit required to conceal carry) and they have some of the lowest violent crime rates in the country.

States such as Illinois, California, New York have very restrictive concealed carry and their violent crime has increased to historical proportions. Criminals are cowards and they love to prey on the unarmed!

Our Oregon Constitution has provided our citizens the right to protect themselves and their loved ones by allowing the right to keep and bear arms, and the privilege to apply for and obtain a concealed carry handgun license. These rights should continue and not be infringed.

SB 554 will cause lawful, honest Oregonians to become unwittingly entrapped in this restrictive jumble of nonsensical restrictions. It appears to me that those who commit Riot, Arson, Assault on Police have no criminal consequences as demonstrated by 2020 riots. Yet the Senate is willing to compose a set of laws to "entrap" the honest, hard working, law abiding citizen and turn them into a felon.

Finally, as a law enforcement officer I was perfectly fine with citizens carrying firearms. Reasonable, honest and decent citizens (most Oregonians) will always be reasonable and law abiding citizens!

I oppose SB 554.

Thank you,
Bennett Rowe