

Honorable legislators of the State of Oregon,

I am writing on behalf of legal and law abiding Concealed Handgun License (CHL) holders in the State of Oregon. I strongly oppose SB554 for a multitude of reasons but mostly because the problem it seeks to "fix" is non-existent. It seems its only intention is to cause people with CHL's to unintentionally commit crimes. This is not an emergency and the proposal to make it such is a misnomer and farce.

I am a law enforcement officer and have been so employed for over 20 years. I could count one hand in those years how many times CHL holders have been an issue to the point that they have committed crimes with their firearms. Even at that, I would call these instances relatively minor. I have enough smarts to realize that number will never be zero and I am only talking about my personal experience, however the people who have gone to the trouble of obtaining their concealed handgun license are not the ones we need to be concerned about. This legislation specifically targets the most law abiding members of society and totally ignores the fact that oftentimes they are the first responders to crime in progress by nature of their location and ability to act.

This legislation will allow certain places to decide at a whim, what is allowable or not. If this is anything but a jab at the law abiding gun owners, I challenge you to show me statistically based numbers of what has caused a problem in this state make it necessary to target CHL holders. I don't dare say that gun crimes will never happen with these folks, however gun crimes are almost entirely perpetrated by criminals who could care less about getting a concealed handgun license. Since this State seems to be drifting more toward the State of Portland and leaving the rest of us out, just ask Portland Police how many of their gun crimes occur by the hand of CHL holders. My educated speculation is that number is very close to zero. You are barking up the wrong tree and simply vilifying those people who we know, based on additional background checks and supervision by the Sheriffs of our State, are making the right choices in life.

The constitution of the State of Oregon states in Article 1, Section 27: "Right to bear arms; military subordinate to civil power. The people shall have the right to bear arms for the defence [sic] of themselves, and the State, but the Military shall be kept in strict subordination to the civil power[.]" This section is actually a stronger and possibly clearer order in my opinion than the Second Amendment of the United States constitution provides. The Oregon Constitution clearly and specifically articulates its intention. The rules in public places should be consistent across the State of Oregon, which this legislation would effectively nullify and make a confusing mess of legal determinations being made by bureaucracies and differing from place to place.

Law enforcement cannot be everywhere, all of the time. Depending on them to help in an immediate time of crisis is unreasonable and precisely why the framers of our State constitution wrote it the way they did. It is the same reason that concealed handgun license holders are allowed to carry firearms in schools and in public buildings. They are the good guys. This legislation is a thinly veiled attempt at taking that right away.

Lets shut this legislation down and lets focus on getting tougher on the people that actually do harm and commit actual persons crimes with firearms like murders and assaults.

Respectfully submitted,

Josh Calef  
Monmouth, Oregon