

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher and Members of the Committee:

My name is Lindsay Berschauer and I'm a County Commissioner in Yamhill County. I represent roughly 108,000 residents and many of the 300,000 CHL holders in Oregon reside in my county. I am testifying today as an individual.
I urge you to OPPOSE Senate Bill 554.

This bill targets lawfully abiding CHL holders and essentially makes them felons by virtue of creating a minefield of gun free zones to which the punishment for carrying is a felony.

I am a CHL holder. I'm a sexual assault survivor and have been a single mother for the past ten years. The choice to become a CHL holder was a serious one for me. I did not grow up with guns in my childhood home. Having a CHL comes with incredible liability and responsibility. I knew that I would need to train regularly to be prepared to use my firearm in self defense so that I didn't hurt myself or anyone else. I knew, after studying the impact of having to use a firearm in self-defense, that I would have tremendous personal liability to deal with. The vast majority of CHL holders are responsible, law abiding citizens. We are not the cause of gun violence. How many CHL permits have been revoked as a result of using a firearm to commit a crime? It's a fraction of a percent.

The irony is not lost on me that legislators like Senator Ginny Burdick will push a bill like this, and in the same breath claim that they are protecting women like me. Setting me up to be a felon because I have a CHL for personal protection does not strengthen women's rights, Senator Burdick.

As a county commissioner, I swore an oath to both the United States and State of Oregon Constitutions to protect the rights of lawfully abiding citizens. Neither constitution gives you the authority to restrict the rights of lawfully abiding residents in our state. I assure you, that as a result of nonsensical bills like this, county commissioners, mayors and city councilors like myself will do everything in our power to protect assault victims, to protect single mothers who take their personal safety seriously, to protect victims of domestic violence, and to protect those who take gun safety seriously.

Everyone wants safe communities. But you are targeting the wrong people with this bill.

Please OPPOSE Senate Bill 554.
Thank you.