

Thank you, Chair Prozanski and Committee Members for holding this hearing on SB 554.

My name is Paul Kemp. I am speaking here as a gun owner, hunter, founding board member of Gun Owners for Responsible Ownership. I am here to be a voice for my sister Carla, and her late husband Steve Forsyth, who was shot in the back of the head and killed at the Clackamas Town Center Mall on December 11th, 2012.

My brother in-law Steve was a man who left a huge imprint on the world and whose legacy and memories live on every day. Steve was a good man, a loving husband, a caring dad who made time to coach basketball and football.

Since my brother-in-law Steve was killed, I have been speaking out about the need to strengthen our gun laws to prevent other tragedies. I speak as someone who knows the very real and tragic consequences of a gun in wrong hands. I also speak as a gun owner and hunter who knows - like the majority of gun owners in this state – and respects the Second Amendment and knows that we can support common sense gun laws that prevent gun violence and respect the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

Today, I am proud to support a bill that does just that. In light of the recent attack at our US Capitol Building on Jan 6th, 2021 where some firearm carrying US Congress members are brazenly going around

metal detectors at the this building, it seems a law is necessary at the federal level as well as the state level to prohibit carrying firearms in sensitive areas.

I have been in our own state capitol building in hearing room 50 where some in the audience were openly carrying firearms while waiting to testify in opposition to gun violence prevention bills. I watched Casey Runyon standup and move towards astronaut Mark Kelly and the governor while Mark was testifying in support of a gun violence prevention bill a few years ago. The governor's security detail kept moving closer to Casey Runyon as he complained about Mark Kelly's supporting testimony for the GVP bill. It was very unnerving to witness this in person, as I waited my turn to testify on a supporting invited panel. Knowing there were others in Hearing Room 50 who were armed and angry about gun safety legislation was unnerving.

Since that hearing day, I have been down to the Salem capitol building many times to testify in support of gun safety legislation, however law enforcement has temporarily blocked the carrying of firearms in the capitol building on those hearing days. This temporary ban was legal and necessary for the safety of all in the building on those hearing days, why would we not make prohibiting firearms in the state capitol and other sensitive areas permanent?

State Senator Brian Boquist even threaten to shoot Oregon State Police officers if Governor Brown sent OSP officers to bring GOP

legislators back to the capitol building after they walked out of the legislative session. Senator Boquist is a military veteran, defense contractor and state legislator, how can someone that irresponsible and angry be allowed to carry a firearm in the State Capitol Building? I do not know if Senator Boquist has a CHL, but I would think that threatening to shoot OSP officers would be a disqualifier to renew a CHL.

And yet we (the public) already cannot take firearms into court houses, IRS offices and many other local, state, and federal buildings for safety reasons.

My daughter is a 4th grade public school teacher in SE Portland, her school and all public schools should be able to prohibit firearms in their buildings. There have been several instances of a teacher leaving a firearm in a bathroom or other place where students have access. These incidents while uncommon have occurred across the country. To my knowledge not one firearm carrying teacher has ever stopped a school shooting.

Verifiable defensive use of firearms by the public is very rare indeed. The average daily death toll of gun violence in the USA was at 89 in 2012. Today, the average daily toll in the USA has risen to over 100 per day. Currently, sales of firearms are at the highest levels ever in the USA. Clearly increased firearm ownership and few restrictions where firearms can be taken is not working.

Passage of Senate Bill 554 would provide additional safety measures at sensitive places around the state – and will help save lives and reduce firearm injuries.

I ask that legislators think of the lives taken and forever altered by gun violence when they consider this bill. Please stand with us and support SB 554.