

Dear Chair Prozanski and Vice-Chair Thatcher and members of the committee,

My name is Janessa Pogue and I am a PCP in Grant County. I am a teacher in a K-12 rural school, an active member of my community, and a college student via distance learning. I speak on behalf of myself. Thank you for facilitating this public testimony. I am here to testify to you in opposition to Senate Bill 554.

I watched the committee livestream today, but was unable to testify via video as I had planned due to the constraints of time. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to testify! Here is my testimony that I had planned to state in the meeting.

By putting restrictions upon the rights of Oregonian citizens to carry arms in public buildings, this bill violates the fundamental law of our state and nation. Both the Oregon Constitution and US Constitution state that the people have the right to keep and bear arms in their own self-defense and to ensure the freedom and safety of this state and nation. If this bill is passed, this right is infringed upon and will not ensure the protection of the people from unlawful or dangerous actions.

By definition, those who have applied, paid the fees, and passed the background checks to obtain a CHL, are law-abiding citizens. They have gone above and beyond to follow the law to protect their right to carry arms. Most, if not all, CHL citizens are proud of their gun safety and training in public situations and the result is the most safe law-abiding citizens of our society.

As this committee has just heard from previous testimony, CHL citizens have the lowest statistics of criminal action, and in actuality, there have been many cases where a CHL citizen has assisted or prevented a violent action in their daily life. By contrast, those citizens who would commit criminal action in violent shootings have already made the decision to break the law, so another law to "promote gun safety" will not prevent criminals from acting violently. It will only prevent law-abiding citizens from keeping the law, and it will punish them by higher fees and potential felony charges for practicing safety in their daily lives.

In passing this bill, I ask the legislators to consider the freedom of their future generations to keep and bear arms in this state. If we infringe on the general right of law-abiding citizens to carry arms in public areas today, then we endanger the lives of our children by restricting their ability to maintain their own safety tomorrow.

And although I appreciate the experience of those who support this bill, I ask them to consider how they expect the safety of their children in schools and public places to be protected if this bill passes. The prohibition of guns in public places does not ensure the absence of gun violence; it merely punishes the law-abiding citizens that would protect our children and families at the potential expense of their own lives, and rewards the criminals with extra time and less risk for committing a violent crime.

Ultimately, all citizens of this state want to live in safe conditions, and we all depend upon the availability of a gun to keep us safe; either the gun of a policeman or the gun of a law-abiding citizen. As has been testified, the readiness of a police gun in a violent action is not reliable for the seconds of life and death situations, so as a concerned CHL carrying citizen, I must rely on my own training and actions to protect myself and my family.

I strongly urge the committee to kill this bill, as I believe it violates our Constitution, endangers the safety of our society, punishes law-abiding citizens, and infringes upon the rights of our future generations.

Thank you for your attention.

Janessa Pogue