

SB 554 is a threat to law abiding Oregonians, and will not only do little to deter or punish criminals, but give them more areas of opportunity for crime and assault. This law would be too likely to affect someone who simply did not realize they were on or too close to public property, and would turn downtown into an obstacle course. It would turn parents, grandparents, college students, victims of domestic violence, and other Oregonians into felons for simply being in the wrong place or for trying to protect themselves.

In addition to that, it would increase safety risks, especially for women and vulnerable people, at public colleges and universities. During college, I had a stalker who would follow me and, on several occasions, openly threatened me with harm. College administrators did nothing when confronted with this, and sided with him because he was a friend of theirs. Security was rarely available, and I had to walk through dark areas in the morning and at night to get to classes or my car due to poor lighting. This was one of several reasons that I chose to get a CHL. You would take our right to self-defense away, both on college and university campuses, and many other places around this state.

Criminals already disregard laws; SB 554 would be no exception. And many, after they are caught, receive nothing but a slap on the wrist from the judicial system. If the state of Oregon is so concerned about violence and assaults, especially when it relates to firearms, maybe it should start with making sure the laws on the books are actually enforced, and that those convicted of breaking those laws (especially violent offenders) are punished accordingly and not simply released back to the public a few months later. SB 554 would do little to nothing to stop the criminals, but would turn law-abiding Oregonians with CHL's – mothers, fathers, grandparents, college students, victims of domestic violence, etc. - into felons for simply being in the wrong place, likely without even realizing it.

I also strongly object to the fact that the initial cost and renewal of a CHL is doubling. This almost seems to be discrimination against those who are low income - that those who may be struggling to get by and are often living in more vulnerable and dangerous areas should have the right to protect themselves priced out of reach! Do only those of higher income deserve to have that right? Fifty dollars may not seem much to someone who is more affluent and is not struggling financially. Especially with all the talk of equal rights and helping out those who are struggling or disadvantaged, it is appalling that the Oregon Legislature would see fit to make it more difficult for low-income families to have a means of self-defense!