

To: Chair Prozanski, Senate Committee on the Judiciary and Members of the Committee
From: Scott Winkels, LOC Intergovernmental Relations
Date: 2/22/2021
Re: League of Oregon Cities Support for SB 554

Dear Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee:

The League of Oregon Cities is an association comprised of all 241 incorporated cities in the state of Oregon. Each of those cities is governed by an elected council or commission with those elected leaders espousing a wide spectrum of political beliefs but are united on the principle of Home Rule. SB 554 places the decision on whether to allow firearms in public buildings in the hands of the local governments who control and manage these facilities in the public interest.

While the Legislature considers the appropriateness of firearms in the Capitol, the LOC would like to point out that Oregon's local governments are preempted from making the same decisions for themselves. Moreover, the incidents and conditions that have led the Legislature to consider taking steps for its own safety can happen just as easily in any public building in this state- but without a contingent of the Oregon State Police for protection. While the Legislature has the power to change the laws governing the possession of firearms in a public building, ORS 166.170 prevents cities from taking this action.

It is highly unlikely that every city on Oregon will choose the restoration of this regulatory authority. However, those that do will be making it for themselves, no county facility inside a city will be subject to a city ordinance and likewise, no city in a county that enacts a prohibition will be subject to that decision unless it chooses to be. These decisions will be truly local in nature.

The LOC thanks the Senate Judiciary Committee for considering this important measure and we look forward to further discussions.