

HB 2572 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**Carrier:** Rep. Grayber**House Committee On Rules**

Action Date: 05/11/23
Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)
Vote: 4-3-0-0
Yeas: 4 - Fahey, Kropf, Nosse, Valderrama
Nays: 3 - Breese-Iverson, Scharf, Wallan
Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: Has minimal revenue impact
Prepared By: Lucy Ohlsen
Meeting Dates: 5/4, 5/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Creates civil action for persons injured as a result of unlawful paramilitary activity. Provides authority for the Attorney General to seek injunctive relief upon reasonable belief that a person or group of persons has engaged in, or is about to engage in, unlawful paramilitary activity. Provides investigative authority to Attorney General if it appears that a person has possession, custody, or control of any material relevant to an investigation of unlawful paramilitary activity. Describes elements of engaging in paramilitary activity for purposes of the civil action and Attorney General authority and lists exemptions. Specifies that to engage in paramilitary activity for purposes of the civil action and Attorney General authority, a person must be armed with a weapon and engage in other conduct, or be training to engage in specified conduct. Defines relevant terms.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Enforcement of similar laws in other states
- Constitutional analysis of measure
- Differentiation between current criminal law and civil prohibition in measure
- Examples of exceptions from prohibition
- Applicable definitions for deadly weapon and dangerous weapon

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Replaces the measure.

BACKGROUND:

According to an Advisory Report released by the Oregon Secretary of State and Oregon Audits Division in March 2022, Oregon ranked sixth in the nation for the number of domestic violent extremist incidents between 2011 and 2020, with the number rising precipitously from 2019 to 2021. The U.S. Department of Justice is the governing entity that most often brings domestic terrorism and violent extremism charges against individuals. However, several states also have legislation defining and criminalizing such activity.

Oregon does not currently define or criminalize domestic terrorism or violent extremism, but since 1983, ORS 166.660 has provided that engaging in "unlawful paramilitary activity" is a Class C felony. Under the statute, a person engages in unlawful paramilitary activity one of two ways: (1) by exhibiting, displaying, or demonstrating to another person the use, application, or making of any firearm, explosive, or other technique capable of causing injury or death, intending or knowing that it will be illegally used in a civil disorder; or (2) assembling with one or more people for the purpose of training, practicing, or receiving instruction in the use of any firearm, explosive, or other technique with the intent to engage in civil disorder. The statute contains several explicit exceptions including for practicing self-defense; lawful sports related to firearms instruction, practice, and training; and activity of the State Department of Fish and Wildlife.

HB 2572 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Bill 2572 A does not make any modifications to the crime of unlawful paramilitary activity under ORS 166.660. The measure provides authority to the Oregon Attorney General (AG) to seek injunctive relief if the AG has reasonable cause to believe that a person or group of persons has engaged in, or is about to engage in, paramilitary activity as part of, or on behalf of a private paramilitary organization as that term is defined in HB 2572 A. The measure also provides the AG with authority to serve an investigative demand on any person who may have material relevant to an investigation of paramilitary activity. Additionally, the measure creates a new civil action which may be brought by any person injured as a result of paramilitary activity as defined in the measure. It specifies that a prevailing plaintiff may recover economic or noneconomic damages, injunctive relief, and reasonable attorney fees. Finally, the measure specifies several exemptions from the AG authority and civil actions for specified groups.