

Honorable Committee Members,

As a retired law enforcement officer & law-abiding Oregonian, I'm writing to OPPOSE HB2572. When I first heard of this bill I honestly thought it was a joke! While initially seeming to target "civil unrest", the amended version appears to ban "3 or more citizens" from conducting firearms safety training unless part of the military, police or other approved government agency. It would essentially outlaw private security patrols and reasonable defense of life & property by private citizens (despite Oregon being an open-carry state).

Surely this legislature is aware that our community wouldn't have needed ordinary citizens to step up and defend innocent victims & businesses if the POLICE WERE ALLOWED TO DO THEIR JOBS! In 2020, violent mobs were allowed to burn, loot & destroy the city of Portland without consequence for more than a year. Antifa, an organized, well-funded & violent extremist group was responsible for countless injuries & millions of dollars in property damage, yet they are specifically not considered a "paramilitary" group under this legislation.

The idea that this proposed law would be applied equally to both sides of the aisle is laughable! The creators of HB2572 have repeatedly targeted "right wing" groups in their rhetoric in support of this bill, while ignoring (or encouraging) left wing groups like antifa & BLM. When corrupt politicians are allowed to prosecute their political enemies while exempting their own supporters, our country is LOST. Individuals & civil rights groups across the political spectrum should be FREE TO PEACEABLY ASSEMBLE as long as they are lawful & nonviolent.

At a time when elected officials have defunded the police, reduced penalties for violent criminals and allowed widespread destruction of our cities, private security & personal armed SELF-DEFENSE TRAINING IS A NECESSITY, not a crime!!

HB2572 violates both the 1st Amendment right to peaceably assemble, as well as the 2nd Amendment right of the people to keep & bear arms. Based on the clear text of the Constitution (as informed by the history & tradition of militias consisting of the "body of the people") & upheld by the Supreme Court as an individual right in DC v Heller, the state CANNOT prohibit law-abiding citizens from owning firearms or conducting appropriate safety & security training.

This obviously unconstitutional bill is a frivolous waste of taxpayer dollars and frankly seems like a craven attempt by democrats to preemptively criminalize lawful behavior by their political opponents. Please use common sense and VOTE NO on HB2572.

Sincerely,
Lesley Roehr