



OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

Protecting Oregon's Wildlife, Habitat and Hunting Heritage

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Testimony on HB2006

Paul Donheffner, Chairman, OHA Legislative Committee

The Oregon Hunters Association, with 26 chapters statewide and over 10,000 members, is strongly opposed to HB-2006. OHA works to teach young people how to be responsible and safe hunters. All youth 17 and under need to complete a Hunter Education Class which includes training on safe gun handling and use. OHA sponsors youth hunting training sessions and field hunting days to mentor young people.

HB-2006 would destroy youth hunting in Oregon. Under this poorly worded and confusing bill:

1. The existing exemption to allow minors to possess firearms for hunting or target practice is eliminated. Section 2(2) page 1, line 29 and page 2, lines 1-3, and Section 4, page 4, lines 18-21.

The existing "exception" in Section 3, page 3, lines 29-30, for licensed hunters or fishermen does NOT cover or help anyone under the age of 18. The bill voids that exemption for all hunters under age 21. This is completely unacceptable to destroy hunting for young people and what is otherwise a healthy multi-generational family activity.

While the hunting laws in Oregon permit youth age 14 and over to hunt unaccompanied if the minor has taken hunter safety, that would now be outlawed. Young age 11 and under don't require a license to hunt to game birds or small game. This bill steps all over existing youth hunting programs and will destroy our hunting heritage.

2. Persons 18 to 21 can't own or possess any gun, unless it is (a) one of a limited list of single-shot rifles or certain shotguns, (b) the possession is "temporary," not long-lasting, AND (c) the gun was transferred to the minor only by his/her parent or guardian. Thus no coach, trainer, instructor, teacher, friend of any age, hunting buddy, grandfather, uncle, etc., can lend a minor a gun for hunting or target shooting or training or competition. Remember that to simply hand a firearm to someone is to "transfer" it.

3. Nobody under age 21 can own or possess (a) any handgun of any type or (b) any semi-automatic firearm of any type. The exemption in Section 3 (5) for police officers is surely a mistake, since the minimum age to become a police officer is 21. So this exemption makes no sense. (page 3, line 33).

4. Persons aged 18-21 may possess only specified single shot rifles and certain shotguns, but no handguns of any type and no semi-automatic shotguns. Semi-automatic shotguns (3 shot capacity) are very popular for waterfowl and bird hunting. Youth waterfowl hunting will be negatively impacted as a result. Why is this necessary?

5. Likewise, the existing "exception" for target shooting at "established target ranges" does not cover or help anyone under age 21 because Section 3(1) (page 2, line 42) wipes out the exemption. It also does not cover shooting at targets or sighting in a rifle in the forest, or on one's own property, anywhere other than an established shooting range constructed and designed for that purpose.

6. The bill makes no exception for persons 18 to 21 who already own firearms that are prohibited under this bill. What are they supposed to do? The measure effectively confiscates their legally purchased and owned firearms without compensation.

HB 2006 will:

--stop hunting by making it too difficult, expensive, and legally dangerous for hunters to own, carry, or use firearms

--break the generational chain of hunting by discouraging/prohibiting/outlawing youth hunting and responsible youth gun ownership and making it too legally dangerous to ever train or mentor a young hunter.

If the goal of this bill is to reduce gun violence and crime involving persons 18 to 21, how does a Class A misdemeanor violation for mere possession dissuade a person from committing a felony robbery, rape or murder with a firearm? Is someone intent on committing a serious crime with a firearm going to worry about a misdemeanor charge while they're carrying out a felony?

HB-2006 will have devastating consequences for hunting and competitive shooting sports for young people. The bill is a confusing layering of prohibitions and exemptions that will have very negative impacts on hunting. People can vote when they're 18 and serve in the military. They are not second class citizens. The Constitution and our 2nd and 14th amendments protects them as well as everyone else.

The Oregon Hunters Association is adamantly opposed to HB-2006.