

March 22, 2023

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Isaac Clayton. I am a resident of Multnomah County, a member of the Democratic Party, and a gun owner. I write today to express my opposition to HB 2007.

While I believe that HB 2007 is motivated by good intentions, I also believe that it fails to strike the proper balance between public safety interests and the rights of citizens of Oregon to own and possess, including in public, firearms for self-defense purposes.

In my view, legislation ought to be evidence-based and not unduly burdensome on law-abiding citizens. I hold this view particularly strongly when the legislation in question would restrict the free exercise of citizens' constitutionally protected rights to firearm ownership and their fundamental right to self-defense.

In recent months I have heard many in my most left-leaning social circles express serious concern at the state of public safety, particularly in Portland where I live. Some have even openly stated their intention to purchase a firearm for self-defense. At a time when a timely law enforcement response is not guaranteed and when crime is on the rise, it seems to me that our efforts ought to be focused on enforcing existing laws, not further eroding the rights of responsible and law-abiding gun owners like me and others who are feeling less and less safe in the own neighborhoods every day.

Oregon has historically done a good job of balancing the rights of citizens with our collective interests in public safety; however, the recent batch of gun legislation, including HB 2007, do little other than make people feel good for having "done something" to combat gun violence, at the cost of infringing on the rights of people like me.

The Oregon State Legislature is the appropriate place to make decisions that would impact the free exercise of constitutionally guaranteed rights, not municipalities. I do not doubt the good intentions of people in these municipalities, but I have ample reasons to doubt their judgement where firearms are concerned. Measure 114 demonstrated clearly that what is popular in, for example, Portland, is not necessarily popular elsewhere, including the courts.

I believe HB 2007 is fundamentally flawed and should be opposed in its entirety. We will not solve our pressing public safety issues by restricting the rights of law-abiding citizens to self-defense. I urge you to reject this bill and any others that are not firmly evidence-based.

Sincerely,

Isaac Clayton