

Testimony of Tom O'Connor
On HB 2005, 2006, 2007
To House Committee on the Judiciary
March 22, 2023

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tom O'Connor. I am a life-long Oregon gun owner, resident of Clackamas County and a founding board member of Gun Owners for Responsible Ownership. I am strongly in support of the three gun safety bills before you today – HB 2005, 2006 and 2007.

HB 2005: Prohibits “ghost guns” and untraceable firearms

Gun Owners for Responsible Ownership has long supported background checks on all gun sales and transfers as the most basic tool we use to try to keep firearms out of the hands of felons, domestic abusers, and those who would do harm to themselves, the public or law enforcement. I strongly support HB 2005 because it will help ensure that undetectable and unserialized firearms can no longer be easily used by criminals or gun traffickers to evade Oregon's requirement.

HB 2006: Raises the age for purchase and possession of certain semi-auto firearms to 21

I support this bill because it is a reasonable compromise approach to help prevent mass shootings, particularly school shootings by 18–20-year-olds who cannot legally purchase a handgun but can buy a military-style semi-auto rifle. It sets a minimum age for purchase or ownership of semi-auto firearms at 21 the same as handguns. The bill exempts active-duty military and reservists and law enforcement from the minimum age requirement.

At the same time HB 2006 recognizes Oregon's long history of youth hunting, competition, and target shooting by ensuring that 18-20-year-olds can buy and own common non-semi-automatic rifles and shotguns used for those sports including single or double barreled or pump shotguns, bolt or lever action rifles, and tube-fed 0.22 rimfire. These are the types of firearms I hunted with as a boy with my father and grandfather and still use today. I would note that they can also be used for home defense if necessary.

HB 2007: Allows local governments to regulate firearms in sensitive areas

Local elected officials should have the ability to regulate firearms in sensitive areas. This bill will allow local governments the option to prohibit firearms on municipal property similar to the authority the legislature granted to schools and universities. Firearms are not political statements or tools to stifle the free speech of others. They

should never be used to intimidate or threaten our fellow citizens or those who are serving the public in their daily jobs.

I believe these bills are sensible laws and regulations to help reduce gun violence in our communities. I am a gun owner. I am also a parent and grandparent and I believe gun owners must do everything we can to help make a world more safe for all our kids.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I urge passage of HB 2005,2006, and 2007.