



E. WERNER RESCHKE
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 55

March 24, 2023

To: Chair Kropf, Vice Chairs Wallan and Andersen and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary

Re: Opposition to HB 2005, HB 2006, HB 2007 - Gun Control Bills

I write my opposition to HB 2005, HB 2006 and HB 2007 in one statement, as I believe these bills are likely to be rolled into one omnibus gun control bill. Moreover, my objection is more about the direction these bills head, and how they want to achieve particular goals.

This is my 4th term as a legislator, but my first time officially speaking out, on the record, in opposition to any one gun control measure. To be clear, I have written a published op-ed piece opposing gun control attempts in the past. Moreover, I have voted NO on all bills that have crossed the House chamber floor during my time as a State Representative. Today, I continue to stand against and write in opposition concerning these three gun control bills for the following reason:

I ask myself, what is the purpose behind these bills? What do they intend to do? What do proponents claim will happen should they pass the legislature and be signed into law by the Governor?

From what I've read in written testimony submitted the committee, the purpose, can be summarized by stating, to "lessen gun violence in Oregon" or to "protect women and children". I think those are noble goals, but my question is whether the policies in HB 2005, Hb 2006 and HB 2007 will work? Asked another way, if one removes the guns from gun violence, what is one left with? The answer is, violence.

A few facts to ponder:

- The homicide rates in Oregon's most populous city skyrocketed **AFTER** the passage of SB 941 in 2019 and SB 554 in 2021.
<https://www.koin.com/news/crime/another-incredibly-violent-year-portlands-2022-homicide-number-higher-than-20-year-average/>
- Chicago, a city whose population is over half the size of Oregon, has some of the strictest gun control laws in the nation, yet some of the highest homicide rates in the nation.

My main concern with these bills is they do not address root issues surrounding gun violence. The fact is, violence is violence, whether caused by a knife, a bomb, a car, a fist or a gun. If the root issues that lead to violence are ignored, or are not focused on in serious way, these same attempts at fixing the problem are likely to fail.

The percentage of gun owners in the United States is nearly identical to what it was 50 years ago. So if gun ownership has changed relatively little over that time, what did change to cause the increase in violence in our society? The answer is much. These are the items I believe we ought to address — not further restricting how, where and when law abiding citizens, aka responsible gun owners, may carry, use or even create a gun.

Guns are not the root cause of the violence problem. Unfortunately instead of focusing on root causes, these bills try to fix the problems on the back end with more prohibitions and regulations. It is just like watching a dog chasing its tail — proud of its progress, but never quite there.

I urge the members of this committee not to move forward HB 2005, HB 2006 or HB 2007.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Werner Reschke', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

E. WERNER RESCHKE
State Representative, HD 55
The Crater Lake District