

March 27, 2025

Senate Committee on Judiciary
Re: SB 243 Opposition

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, Members of the Committee,

The undersigned conservation and recreation organizations representing sportsmen and women throughout Oregon oppose SB 243.

The components regarding restricting possession of a firearm under the age of 21 and the restriction of possession of semi-automatic rifles and shotguns will have a negative impact on youth and young adult hunting opportunity.

The current statute language allows for the transfer of a firearm to the minor by parent or guardian or by another person with the consent of the parent or guardian. It also specifically allows for temporary possession for hunting, target practice, and any other lawful purpose. With the removal of this language, and the restriction of possession of a semi-automatic firearm, SB 243 negatively impacts hunting & sport shooting in the following ways:

SB 243 specifically outlaws semi-automatic rifles and shotguns

Semi-automatic shotguns, with a 3-shot capacity, are standardly used in waterfowl, upland bird, and turkey hunting, as well as high school and collegiate shooting teams. The firearm is the most appropriate equipment for many forms of hunting and sport shooting. Additionally, semi-automatic shotguns are used often for safety and skills courses such as the shotgun skills courses taught by Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife employees and furnished with ODFW-owned firearms.

SB 243 restricts the ability for minors to use a firearm other than owned by parent

SB 243's restrictive language stating that only a parent or guardian can transfer the firearm to the minor would mean the shotgun skills courses taught by ODFW could no longer legally provide firearms for students under 21. The same would be true regarding the loan of school or club-owned semi-automatic shotguns for high school and collegiate shooting teams. This type of restriction creates a barrier to entry for youth and young adults wishing to train and participate in hunting or sport shooting.

Restricting the transfer of a firearm to a minor to only the parent or guardian creates a "generational bias" against a new youth or young adult hunter who does not have a parent or guardian who is already a hunter. If they are not from a hunting family, it is highly unlikely they would have access to the appropriate firearm needed for the entry level hunting experiences of waterfowl, upland bird, and turkey hunting or sport shooting.

Our organizations invest countless hours in an effort to overcome this generational gap with our hunter education and recruitment efforts as we understand that many people do not have a built-in mentor figure within their family. Much of our focus in recruitment efforts is aimed at creating the generational shift by creating a new hunter who will then become the mentor for future generations. However, SB 243 creates numerous obstacles to providing the opportunity, training, and support needed to establish a new youth or young adult hunter.

The language of SB 243 would prevent families from creating memories like the picture to the right. In it, 10-year-old Sabrina Little is on her first duck hunt with her dad at a National Wildlife Refuge. She is using a 3-shot semi-automatic shotgun, which is the most common type of legal hunting shotgun used for waterfowling and the easiest firearm to use for a beginner. In order to obtain her first hunting license, Sabrina had to take an intensive gun safety training course offered by the state wildlife agency.



According to the [2022 USFW Fishing and Hunting Recruitment, Retention, and Reactivation in the U.S.](#) study, “Thirty percent of first-time anglers were 10 years old or younger compared to 21 percent of first-time hunters. However, the cumulative percent of individuals hunting for the first time increases rapidly through the teenage years, so roughly half of both first-time hunters and anglers are 20 years of age or younger: 52 percent of hunters and 49 percent of anglers, respectively. This finding underscores the importance of recruitment during the adolescent years.”

SB 243 is ambiguous regarding parent or guardian presence with firearm

This caveat would negatively effect our young adult hunters who no longer live with their parents or may be attending college separate from their families, it would also effect high school and sport shooting participants who’s parents may or may not travel with them to tournaments and events.

SB 243 creates numerous obstacles for youth and young adult hunters and sport shooters. The negative effects for Oregon’s hunters would be long-lasting and impact our ability to properly equip, train, and mentor the next generations of hunters. As such, we oppose SB 243.

Oregon Hunters Association

National Wild Turkey Federation

Ducks Unlimited

Oregon Wild Sheep Foundation

Delta Waterfowl

Oregon & National Trappers Association

Safari Club International

Congressional Sportsmen’s Foundation

Oregon Association of of Shooting Rangers

Oregon Backcountry Hunters & Angers

Oregon State Shooting Association

Oregon United Sporting Dogs Association

Howl for Wildlife

Oregon Anglers Alliance

Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

Fur Takers of America