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My name is Justin, and I live in a small rural town in Oregon. Many politicians in Oregon seem unaware that these small towns even exist. Like most rural communities, we are often forgotten by those in power. Our area, though vast with wheat fields and farming communities, it lacks the population numbers that politicians typically prioritize.

Growing up in a small rural town, I was raised with hunting as a part of my life. I've had a firearm in my possession, in my vehicle, or within arm's reach since I was under 10 years old. I was taught to respect firearms, not through formal training, but through parental guidance and responsibility.

In high school, I often had a deer rifle in the back window of my truck, which was parked in the school parking lot. This wasn't due to any sinister intentions but because it was necessary to deal with coyotes chasing livestock or to go deer hunting during lunch or after football practice. I wasn't the only one; in fact, many students had similar setups. My school, though small—about 150 students in grades K-12—reflected the same values, and many of us were raised the same way.

I served in the U.S. Army from 2004 to 2011. During my years of service, I underwent thousands of hours of firearms training. I served as a range non-commissioned officer (NCO), overseeing the training of junior and senior military personnel. The firearms I trained with were military-grade, designed for combat, not like civilian versions sold in stores.

After my military service, I became a police officer, where firearms training continued. Part of my many additional duties, I served as the range master and armorer for my agency. I was the only one authorized to disassemble rifles down to their bare frames, meaning there were no springs, pins, or functioning parts remaining in the receiver or bolt carrier group.

I later worked as a full-time deputy at a Sheriff's Office in Oregon. Again, I held the additional duty roles of armorer and range master. I instructed SWAT officers and patrol deputies on tactics and firing positions to improve their accuracy with pistols, semi-automatic rifles, bolt-action rifles, and non-lethal weapons.

During my time in law enforcement, I arrested numerous criminals in possession of firearms obtained illegally—most of them career criminals who began their criminal activities at 18. These individuals often stole firearms during home invasions or car prowls, which were then used in further crimes.

After an arrest, the firearms were seized by law enforcement and stored in evidence rooms for years, while the courts debated whether the criminal needed rehab or prison. Once a criminal was sentenced to rehab, many absconded, starting the cycle of crime again. Victims were re-victimized, and the cycle continued because of misguided laws like Measure 110 in Salem.

I share my story for a simple reason: magazine limits and requiring permits for law-abiding citizens to purchase firearms will not stop crime. These measures don't enhance public safety—they only restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens.

What do magazine size limits do for law-abiding citizens? They hinder the ability to defend oneself and to train effectively with firearms. They also impose additional costs, forcing citizens to replace magazines that they legally acquired years ago or face the threat of prison time for possessing their legally purchased property.

Over the years, I've purchased many firearms. Every purchase involves a background check, and even though I have a concealed weapons permit, have no criminal record, and no traffic citations, it still takes about 5-9 days for my background check to be completed through the Oregon State Police.

Why should a law-abiding citizen with no criminal history have to endure extra steps to purchase a firearm? The state does not provide sufficient funding to these agencies, and most of Oregon's 36 counties don't have the staff or resources to implement a program to process permits. This means that some citizens can't even purchase a firearm because their county is unable to issue the permit due to lack of funding and infrastructure.

Requiring citizens to obtain a permit that is effectively unachievable prevents them from exercising their constitutional right to possess a firearm, whether for sport or protection. The Second Amendment has been repeatedly threatened by states like California, Illinois, and New York, all of which have some of the strictest gun laws in the country but also suffer from the highest crime rates.

Politicians in Oregon often rely on opinions from Portland (a city plagued by gang violence and gun crimes), Salem (a city struggling with crime), and Eugene (another city with high crime rates). They follow the lead of lawmakers in California, instead of understanding the realities faced by rural communities like mine.

In my years of service to both my community and country, I've seen firsthand that criminals don't care about laws, and politicians rarely listen to voices like mine from rural areas.

In conclusion, I would argue that gun regulations targeting responsible, law-abiding citizens are *misguided and ineffective* at reducing crime. Instead, these laws place unnecessary burdens on those who respect the law, hinder self-defense, and fail to address the root causes of crime. My experience in both military and law enforcement roles provide me with a deep understanding of firearms, crime prevention, and public safety. To protect constitutional rights and enhance public safety, I believe additional gun law is not what the issues are, but the fact that one political party has been hell bent on removing firearms from law abiding citizens by any means necessary.