

I submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 4145.

HB 4145 converts a constitutional right into a government permission system. It imposes new financial costs, administrative delays, and discretionary approval standards on the lawful exercise of the right to keep and bear arms.

The bill allows the state up to sixty days to approve or deny a permit to purchase a firearm and authorizes fees of up to one hundred and fifty dollars. These are not neutral policies. Delays and costs disproportionately affect low-income individuals, women seeking self-defense, and people who cannot afford extended waiting periods or additional financial barriers. A right that requires time, money, and bureaucratic approval becomes a privilege in practice.

HB 4145 also allows permits to be denied based on subjective predictions about whether an applicant is “reasonably likely” to be a danger. This introduces discretionary, predictive standards into the exercise of a constitutional right. History shows that such standards are not applied equally and tend to burden marginalized and vulnerable populations first.

Oregon already requires background checks for firearm purchases, and federal law already prohibits firearm possession for individuals with serious criminal convictions. There is no credible evidence that adding additional administrative layers on top of existing systems reduces violent crime. According to national research, most gun violence is driven by a relatively small number of repeat offenders using illegally obtained firearms, not by first-time lawful purchasers.

The bill also continues restrictions on commonly owned firearm equipment. However, national crime data consistently shows that rifles of any kind account for a small fraction of homicides each year, far fewer than many other commonly used means. These policies focus on equipment rather than addressing the root causes of violence.

From a public safety perspective, HB 4145 risks creating a chilling effect. When access becomes more expensive, slower, and more complex, fewer people pursue training, education, and responsible ownership. That undermines safety culture rather than strengthening it.

Finally, HB 4145 restricts all legal challenges to a single county. If the law is constitutional and defensible, there should be no need to limit where citizens may seek judicial review.

Public safety is best served by addressing violence at its roots — through mental health care, economic stability, and targeted intervention — not by imposing broad restrictions on lawful behavior.

HB 4145 does not meaningfully target criminal misuse of firearms. It primarily burdens people who are already trying to follow the law.

For these reasons, I urge the legislature not to advance HB 4145.