

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 4145

House Committee on Judiciary • February 2, 2026

Position: OPPOSE

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

My name is Taylor Meek, and I am a resident of Portland, Oregon. My children attend Portland Public Schools in the Mandarin Immersion Program. I am submitting this testimony in **opposition to House Bill 4145**.

I want to be clear about who I am: I am a registered Democrat and vote consistently for progressive candidates and policies. I believe in universal healthcare, a strong social safety net, environmental protections that preserve my childrens' futures, and robust protections for immigrant communities. ***I am also a concealed handgun license holder in both Oregon and Utah***, raised in a family of hunters in Albany, Oregon, and a firm believer in the constitutional right of law-abiding citizens to ***defend themselves and their communities***.

I learned of this hearing only this morning. The legislature has given the public mere hours to analyze a 27-page bill and prepare testimony. This rushed process—scheduling a hearing on day one of session with minimal notice—suggests the sponsors know this bill cannot withstand public scrutiny. ***Good legislation does not fear democratic participation.***

I represent many Oregonians who don't fit neatly into political stereotypes. I urge this committee to oppose HB 4145 for the following reasons:

THE CURRENT MOMENT DEMANDS WE PROTECT COMMUNITIES, NOT DISARM THEM

We are living through a crisis. In Minnesota, Operation Metro Surge has resulted in the detention of multiple U.S. citizens and the killing of two Americans by federal agents: Renee Good on January 7th and Alex Pretti on January 24th. U.S. citizens Aliya Rahman, ChongLy Scott Thao, and Mubashir Khalif Hussen have been detained, handcuffed, and terrorized—despite being American citizens who committed no crime.

And it is not just federal agents. Across the country, ***private citizens are exploiting this climate of fear to prey on immigrant communities***. The FBI has issued warnings about a surge in ICE impersonators committing kidnappings, robberies, and sexual assaults. ***In South Carolina, Sean-Michael Johnson detained Latino men at gunpoint while shouting "You're going back to Mexico!" In North Carolina, Carl Thomas Bennett posed as an ICE officer to kidnap and rape an immigrant woman. In Brooklyn, a man impersonating ICE attempted to sexually assault a 51-year-old immigrant.*** A CNN review found two dozen such incidents in 2025 alone—more than the previous four presidential terms combined.

Meanwhile, white nationalist groups like Patriot Front have staged coordinated anti-immigrant demonstrations across multiple states. In February 2025, apparent car-ramming attacks targeted immigrant rights protesters in Texas, Arizona, and Utah. Anti-immigrant hate crimes in Manhattan surged 900% compared to the prior year.

This is not hypothetical. This is happening now.

And it is happening in Portland. On January 8th—just weeks ago—U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers shot two unarmed people in the Hazelwood neighborhood, one day after Renee Good was killed in Minneapolis. ICE arrests in Oregon increased tenfold in 2025, from 113 to over 1,200. Federal agents have been posted outside schools in Woodburn and Wilsonville. Mayor Wilson has called on ICE to suspend operations pending investigation.

This is not a potential ramp-up. ICE--and their civilian cronies--are already here, and their presence is escalating.

My children's school community includes immigrant and refugee families. Our Mandarin Immersion Program reflects Portland's diverse, international character. When I drop my children off at school, I think about protecting our neighbors, our children's classmates' families, and our community—from both federal overreach **and the civilian bad actors who are exploiting this moment to terrorize vulnerable people.**

Yet under Oregon law, ***I cannot carry my firearm on school grounds to pick up my children, despite holding a valid concealed handgun license.*** ORS 166.377, passed in 2021, allows school boards to strip CHL holders of the exemption that previously protected us. Portland Public Schools has adopted such a policy.

I am not asking to carry in classrooms. ***I am asking why a law-abiding citizen who has demonstrated responsibility to the state's satisfaction is treated no differently than someone with no training, no permit, and no demonstrated responsibility.***

CHL HOLDERS HAVE DONE THE WORK. WE DESERVE RECOGNITION.

To obtain my concealed handgun license, I:

- Submitted to fingerprinting and a criminal background check
- Completed a state-approved firearms safety course
- Demonstrated competence with a firearm
- Paid fees and waited for approval
- Renewed every four years

This is precisely the kind of "responsible gun ownership" that gun control advocates say they want to encourage. **Yet HB 4145—like SB 243, like ORS 166.377—provides no carve-out, no recognition, no respect for CHL holders who have done everything the state asked.**

Meanwhile, this bill exempts retired law enforcement officers from permit requirements and magazine restrictions, even when off-duty or decades after retirement. But retirement from law enforcement does not guarantee good character. **Some officers retire to avoid discipline or accountability for misconduct.** The badge they once wore is not a permanent certificate of trustworthiness—especially not decades later.

The message is clear: some Oregonians are trusted citizens; the rest of us are suspects.

THE EMERGENCY CLAUSE SUBVERTS DEMOCRATIC ACCOUNTABILITY

HB 4145 includes an emergency clause that prevents Oregonians from exercising our constitutional referendum rights under Article IV, Section 1(3)(a). Yet this is not a genuine emergency—the permit requirement does not take effect until January 1, 2028, nearly two years from now.

Measure 114 passed in 2022 by only 50.65%, with rural counties opposing it by ratios as high as 3-to-1. This bill imposes provisions more restrictive than what voters approved while blocking any referendum. If these provisions represent good policy, they should withstand democratic scrutiny.

FEE INCREASES CREATE ECONOMIC BARRIERS TO CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

HB 4145 increases the maximum permit fee from \$65 to \$150—a 131% increase. Renewal fees jump from \$50 to \$110. Combined with mandatory training, fingerprinting, and time away from work, the total cost to exercise a constitutional right can exceed \$300-400.

We do not charge Oregonians \$150 to vote or to protest against ICE. The Second Amendment should not become a privilege for those who can afford it.

EXTENDED PROCESSING TIMES ENDANGER VULNERABLE OREGONIANS

Doubling the processing window from 30 to 60 days has real consequences. For someone facing a credible threat—a stalking victim, someone fleeing domestic violence, an immigrant family receiving threats from emboldened vigilantes—two months without the ability to legally purchase a firearm can be the difference between safety and tragedy.

CONCLUSION

I am not opposed to all gun regulations. I support background checks. I completed extensive training for my concealed handgun license and have gone through federal ATF approvals. I believe in responsible gun ownership.

But HB 4145 continues a troubling pattern: every new piece of firearms legislation burdens law-abiding CHL holders while providing no recognition of our demonstrated responsibility. At a moment when immigrant communities, communities of color, and marginalized Oregonians face real threats from federal agents who have killed two Americans this month, from ICE impersonators committing kidnappings and sexual assaults, and from white nationalist groups staging coordinated attacks—the legislature's response is to make it harder and more expensive for law-abiding citizens to protect themselves and their communities.

I respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB 4145.

But more than that, I urge this committee to fundamentally reconsider how Oregon treats concealed handgun license holders. We have demonstrated responsibility. We have submitted to background checks, fingerprinting, and training. We have proven ourselves to the state's satisfaction. We should not be treated as suspects in every subsequent piece of legislation.

I call on this committee to:

- 1. Oppose HB 4145 in its entirety.**
- 2. Commit to including meaningful CHL carve-outs in ALL future firearms legislation—recognizing that permit holders have already demonstrated the responsibility that these laws claim to promote.**
- 3. Advocate for legislative changes that permit CHL holders greater access to public spaces—including schools—and without irrational magazine limits so that we can HELP PREVENT AND DISCOURAGE mass shootings rather than being disarmed in the places where they are most likely to occur, and where mass shooters know they'll be unopposed.**

The communities that progressives claim to protect—immigrants, refugees, people of color—are under attack right now. CHL holders are not the threat. We can be part of the solution.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Taylor Meek
Portland, Oregon