

Submitter: Don Ross
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4145

Oppositional Statement to House Bill 4145

Chair and Members of the Committee,

I respectfully submit this testimony in opposition to House Bill 4145 as currently written.

My concern is not necessarily with the stated intent of the bill, but with its cumulative practical impact—particularly on rural residents and economically vulnerable Oregonians.

First, the provision requiring legal processes to proceed through Marion County centralizes access in a way that creates disproportionate hardship for individuals living outside the Willamette Valley. For residents in Eastern, Southern, or Coastal Oregon, participation may require significant travel time, transportation costs, lodging expenses, and lost wages. For working families and individuals already navigating legal processes, these additional burdens may function as a deterrent to participation.

Access to legal process should not be materially influenced by geography or financial capacity. Centralization without strong remote or regional access alternatives risks creating unequal burdens across the state.

Second, the bill introduces or anticipates a fee structure that compounds these access concerns. The yet-undetermined process of applying for a permit—at additional cost—combined with the requirement to complete live-fire training—also at additional cost—creates layered financial barriers. While each requirement may appear administratively reasonable in isolation, their cumulative effect is significant.

For economically challenged Oregonians, these added costs may place compliance or participation effectively out of reach. Policies that impose multiple fee-based requirements should be carefully evaluated for their real-world impact on low-income individuals, rural residents, and those with limited transportation access. Financial barriers can operate as functional exclusions, even if that is not the stated intent.

Finally, legislation of this nature should remain grounded in neutral policy analysis, operational practicality, and equitable statewide access. While personal experiences and historical concerns deserve acknowledgment, structural decisions affecting legal

access and permitting frameworks should be guided by professionalism, data, and a careful evaluation of unintended consequences. Policy built on durable principles ensures fairness across changing circumstances.

If HB 4145 is to advance, I would respectfully urge consideration of amendments that:

- Provide meaningful remote and regional access alternatives
- Include hardship waivers or fee reductions based on income
- Clearly define the permit process and associated costs
- Evaluate cumulative fiscal impacts on rural and low-income residents
- Ensure that access to lawful processes is not conditioned on financial capacity

Oregon's legislative framework should reflect geographic equity and economic accessibility. Any statutory change that alters access to legal processes or imposes layered financial requirements should be calibrated to avoid unintentionally limiting participation by the very residents most in need of equal access.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Don Ross