

Submitter: Gary Kieser

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4145

Chair and Members of the Committee,

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

While I appreciate the Legislature's desire to improve public safety, HB 4145 raises serious constitutional, practical, and policy concerns. In my view, this bill infringes on the rights of law-abiding Oregonians, diverts scarce public resources, and is unlikely to reduce crime.

First, the bill presents significant constitutional concerns. The Second Amendment to the United States Constitution, as well as Article I, Section 27 of the Oregon Constitution, protects the right of law-abiding citizens to keep and bear arms. Recent United States Supreme Court decisions have made clear that firearm regulations must be consistent with the nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation. Broad restrictions that burden ordinary, responsible citizens—without clear historical analogues—are constitutionally suspect. Legislation that invites years of costly litigation is not sound public policy.

Second, HB 4145 primarily impacts individuals who already comply with the law. Criminals, by definition, do not follow firearms regulations. Imposing additional barriers, fees, delays, or restrictions on lawful purchasers does not meaningfully address the root causes of violent crime. Instead, it risks creating bureaucratic hurdles that disproportionately affect low-income residents, rural Oregonians, and those seeking to exercise a fundamental constitutional right for self-defense.

Third, the bill will likely consume significant public resources while producing little measurable benefit. Implementation, oversight, enforcement, and inevitable legal challenges will require funding and personnel. Those resources would be better directed toward proven crime-reduction strategies such as targeted enforcement against repeat violent offenders, community-based intervention programs, and improved mental health services.

Finally, policies similar to those proposed in HB 4145—as well as those embodied in Measure 114—have been tried in other states. The empirical evidence does not demonstrate a consistent or meaningful reduction in violent crime attributable to these types of restrictions. States and localities with strict permitting schemes and expanded regulatory frameworks continue to struggle with serious violent crime. Public policy should be guided by data, not by the understandable but misplaced belief that additional regulation of lawful conduct will deter unlawful behavior.

Oregonians deserve policies that are constitutional, effective, and focused on those who actually commit crimes. HB 4145 does not meet that standard.

I urge the Committee to oppose this bill and instead pursue solutions that directly target violent offenders, strengthen mental health systems, and support law enforcement in enforcing existing laws.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Respectfully submitted,
Gary Kieser