

Submitter: John Shelton
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4145

TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO HB 4145

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is John Shelton. I am a lifelong Oregon resident, a father, and a man who works for a living. I pay my taxes. I follow the law. I contribute to my community. I am here today in firm opposition to House Bill 4145.

I want to be clear from the beginning: I believe in responsibility. I believe in safety. I believe in accountability. What I do not believe in is burdening law-abiding citizens with financial penalties and bureaucratic obstacles that do nothing to deter criminals.

HB 4145 expands and reinforces a permit-to-purchase system that dramatically increases fees, extends waiting periods, and adds procedural hurdles for citizens who have done nothing wrong. The cost to exercise a constitutional right would more than double. For someone like me — someone who works hard for every dollar — that matters. For many Oregonians living paycheck to paycheck, it matters even more.

A constitutional right should not depend on how much disposable income someone has.

This bill extends permit processing timelines and adds additional administrative control, yet the state has already demonstrated that it lacks the infrastructure to implement the system it is mandating efficiently. Delays do not increase safety. Red tape does not stop criminals. What it does is stall and obstruct lawful citizens' exercise of their rights.

Criminals will not comply with permit requirements. They will not pay fees. They will not wait for background checks. They will not adhere to magazine restrictions. The only people who will comply are the people who already follow the law.

HB 4145 also creates exemptions for certain classes of individuals, including current and retired law enforcement. I respect those who serve. But equal protection under the law means the law applies equally. A system where one group is trusted while ordinary citizens are burdened undermines fairness and public confidence.

Additionally, forcing all legal challenges into a single venue makes it harder and more

expensive for everyday citizens to seek judicial review. Access to justice should not depend on travel budgets or legal resources.

I am not asking for special treatment. I am asking for equal treatment. I am asking that the rights guaranteed to citizens not be turned into privileges available only to those who can afford them or navigate an expanding bureaucracy.

Public safety is a serious issue. Violent crime should be addressed directly and decisively. Repeat offenders should be held accountable. Existing laws should be enforced. But HB 4145 does not target violent criminals. It targets compliance.

I work for a living. I raise my family. I obey the law. I take responsibility for my own safety and the safety of those I love. I should not have to ask permission at an inflated cost to exercise a right that the Constitution already protects.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge this committee to reject HB 4145.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

John Shelton