

Submitter: Kolten Paryzek
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB4145

Dear Senate Committee,

I am writing as a concerned citizen of Oregon to respectfully urge you to oppose HB 4145 or significantly reconsider its structure and long-term implications.

I understand that supporters argue this bill is about public safety, not about restricting rights. Public safety is a legitimate and important responsibility of government. However, the concern many of us share is not about safety as a goal, it is about the method being used to pursue it. When the exercise of a constitutionally protected right is conditioned upon obtaining government permission, paying fees, completing mandated processes, and awaiting administrative approval, the nature of that right fundamentally changes. It shifts from a guaranteed liberty to a state-managed privilege.

Some argue that we already require permits for other activities, such as driving. But driving is not an enumerated constitutional right; it is a regulated activity conducted on public infrastructure. Constitutional rights; whether speech, religious practice, assembly, or the right to keep and bear arms occupy a different legal and moral category. The distinction matters.

Others claim that permitting systems are “common sense” and that responsible citizens should not object if they have nothing to hide or have ill intent. Respectfully, the issue is not about hiding anything or intent. The issue is whether constitutional rights should be exercised freely by default, or only after government approval. History shows that rights are rarely eliminated outright. Instead, they are gradually conditioned, narrowed, and burdened through layered regulations that may seem modest in isolation but accumulate over time.

Supporters may also argue that courts have allowed certain regulations of constitutional rights. That is true. No right is entirely without limits. However, the existence of permissible regulation does not mean any regulatory framework is wise, balanced, or consistent with the spirit of constitutional protections. The question before the Oregon Legislative Assembly is not merely what is legally defensible, but what precedent is prudent.

If it becomes acceptable to require a permit before exercising one enumerated right, it becomes far easier to justify similar systems for others. Even if that is not the intent of this bill, laws establish frameworks that future lawmakers may expand upon.

Safeguarding constitutional principles requires looking beyond immediate political objectives and considering long-term structural consequences.

Public safety and constitutional integrity do not need to be opposing values. There are policy approaches that focus on criminal misuse and enforcement of existing laws rather than creating new layers of permission for law-abiding citizens.

I respectfully ask that you consider whether HB 4145 strengthens Oregon in a way that preserves both safety and the foundational liberties that define our state and nation.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Kolten Paryzek