

Chair Jama, Vice Chair Starr and committee members. I am Rick Coufal, a retired US Army Colonel, Retired Oregon Law Enforcement and I am testifying against this bill.

### **Opposition to House Bill 4145: Concerns Regarding Cost, Training, and Permit Issuance**

House Bill 4145 proposes significant changes to Oregon's firearm permitting process, but these changes raise serious concerns regarding affordability, training adequacy, and the discretionary nature of permit issuance. While the bill aims to enhance public safety, its provisions may disproportionately burden law-abiding citizens and fail to address the root causes of gun violence.

**Excessive Costs for Permits and Training** One of the most concerning aspects of HB 4145 is the substantial increase in costs associated with obtaining a firearm permit. The bill raises the maximum fee for an initial permit application from \$65 to \$150, more than doubling the financial burden on applicants. Additionally, the renewal fee has increased from \$50 to \$110. These fees include costs for fingerprinting, photographing, and conducting criminal background checks, with up to \$48 allocated to the Department of State Police for the background check.

On top of these fees, applicants are required to complete a firearm safety training course, which must include components such as federal and state laws, safe storage practices, and an in-person demonstration of firearm handling. While the bill allows for alternatives like concealed handgun license training or military qualifications, these courses can still be costly, depending on the provider. For many individuals, especially those with limited income, the combined costs of the permit application and training could make firearm ownership financially inaccessible, effectively infringing on their constitutional rights.

**Inadequate Training Requirements** While the bill mandates firearm safety training, the requirements outlined in HB 4145 are vague and lack standardization. The bill allows online courses to fulfill certain components of the training, which may not adequately prepare

individuals for the responsibilities of firearm ownership. The in-person demonstration of firearm handling is required to be conducted by an instructor approved by a law enforcement agency, but the bill does not specify clear criteria for instructor qualifications or the quality of training provided. This lack of standardization could lead to inconsistent training experiences, leaving some permit holders underprepared to safely handle firearms.

**Discretionary Nature of Permit Issuance** HB 4145 does not establish a "shall issue" standard for firearm permits, which means that permit agents—county sheriffs or police chiefs—retain significant discretion in determining whether an applicant qualifies for a permit. The bill allows permit agents to deny applications if they have "reasonable grounds" to believe the applicant may pose a danger to themselves, others, or the community. This subjective standard could lead to inconsistent and potentially discriminatory application of the law, as decisions may be influenced by personal biases or varying interpretations of "reasonable grounds." Law-abiding citizens who meet all legal requirements could still face arbitrary denials, further restricting their ability to exercise their Second Amendment rights.

**Conclusion** While the stated goal of HB 4145 is to reduce gun violence, the proposed changes to the permitting process raise serious concerns. The excessive costs, inadequate training requirements, and discretionary nature of permit issuance create barriers for responsible firearm ownership without addressing the root causes of gun violence. Lawmakers should consider alternative measures that focus on enforcing existing laws, addressing mental health issues, and targeting illegal firearms trafficking, rather than imposing financial and procedural obstacles on law-abiding citizens.