



# OREGON HUNTERS ASSOCIATION

*WILDLIFE • HABITAT • HUNTERS' RIGHTS*

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Testimony on HB-2510

Paul Donheffner, Legislative Committee Chairman

The Oregon Hunters Association, with over 10,000 members statewide, is strongly opposed to HB-2510, which would make a number of changes to Oregon's statutes that we believe infringe on, or violate, our 2nd Amendment Rights to keep and bear Arms, under the U.S. and State Constitutions.

This bill will subject hundreds of thousands of law abiding citizens with potential criminal and civil liability overnight for actions that are perfectly legal today. The strict liability provisions of this bill are draconian. Shifting the burden onto law abiding gun owners for the actions of thieves is crazy.

OHA believes the safe storage of firearms is a personal responsibility, period. It is something that everyone should take seriously. And we do. It should not be something the State mandates or prescribes in ways that trip up law abiding citizens and makes them into criminals. The provisions in the bill will have negative consequences on self defense, where a firearm needs to be accessible or its of no use. Trigger and cable locks are ineffective if someone really wants to gain access to a firearm. Cables are no match for a cheap bolt cutter.

After following its efforts dealing with the pandemic, we are horrified to think of the Oregon Health Authority's role in regulating gun storage. What makes the Oregon Health Authority the appropriate agency to prescribe gun storage? Their track record this past year is reason enough to oppose this bill. This is a big deal.

The theft reporting requirements have the potential for making the victim of theft into a criminal, or subject to unlimited liability. Reporting a gun theft will do **nothing** to prevent its potential use to commit a crime or injure/kill others. Even if the police know it is stolen, what does that do? **Nothing.** It's a record that can get lost, and it doesn't stop the thief at all. Most good citizens will report a theft, why criminalize them if they don't? This bill does nothing to impose sanctions on the thieves, but sanctions the victims.

OHA is very concerned that Section 6 of this bill will trip up parents and family members who are trying to teach responsible gun ownership and use to minors. While it appears to exempt minors engaged in hunting, it makes it illegal for a minor to practice target shooting except at "designated" shooting ranges. In many parts of the state there are no "designated" shooting ranges. Instead, people use private or public property where

it is safe to discharge firearms. This bill would prohibit minors from target shooting except at a "designated" range. In addition, the minor must possess a hunting license merely to engage in target practice per Section 6(4)(a)(B). These kind of "gotcha" trip ups will criminalize everyday behavior in many rural parts of the state.

We have consulted with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife over the consequences of this bill for youth hunting and hunter education. Section 6 doesn't specifically mention an exemption for hunter education or firearm safety classes.

Adults learn to target shooting and hunt from family and friends and may borrow firearms. There is no explicit exemption for this kind of activity. The vague language of the bill will catch law abiding citizens in a "gotcha" situation. Exempt all persons, including youth, while engaged in hunting, target practice, hunter education and safety training from this bill entirely. Even then it is a bad bill from a personal protection standpoint. It will make people into lawbreakers. Is that the role of the Legislature for law abiding citizens? We have so many other problems facing this state.

Furthermore, this bill would require hunters and target shooters to transport firearms with a trigger lock or locked case. A locked trunk or glove box would not suffice unless I'm alone and the gun is within my reach and control. The bill is too much overreach.

HB-2510 will have all kinds of unintended consequences that will criminalize what law abiding citizens do, while doing nothing to punish gun thieves and others who violate Oregon's already strict gun laws.

Finally, we must say that there is a real gun problem in Oregon. It's called Portland. Gun violence and shootings appear to be completely out of control, especially since the police have been sidelined. If the Legislature wants to tackle a real problem, take that one on and deal with gangs and a lack of law enforcement in Portland. Making all of the other law abiding citizens lock up their firearms is not the answer.

Members of OHA are law abiding hunters, and law abiding gun owners. We have witnessed the erosion of our rights and liberties, and HB-2510 is just the most recent example of trying to take away our rights, which are protected under the U.S. and Oregon Constitutions. Members of the Legislature take an oath of office to uphold and defend the Constitution. Please take a moment to reflect on that. Please uphold and protect our rights by opposing this bill.