

To the attention of Chair Prozanski, Vice-chair Thatcher and the committee:

My name is Joe Widner and I come before you in opposition to Senate Bill 554.

Why is SB554 working at legislating solutions to problems that do not exist? This Bill is an attempt at creating a Law to address perceived issues that are already covered by other laws that directly address the types of violence and criminal action I think the drafters/supporters of this are concerned with. This law makes criminals out of Lawful citizens with no history of violence or crimes against the community; this law in-fact targets citizens that have ALREADY proven their trustworthiness and safety through professional training and criminal background checks.

Oregon is facing real and serious issues RIGHT NOW, and this bill does not address The Peoples needs. Covid-19 rages, the Portland downtown has been turned into a post-apocalyptic wasteland (with violence still regularly occurring), Small business are shuttered, and families have lost their loved-ones, homes and livelihoods to pandemics and government lockdowns, but at this time, this body chooses to spend their time and The Peoples money pushing pet projects while clutching-their-pearls in feigned concerned and indignation about problems that simply do not exist. There is absolutely no cause for more laws to address the errantly perceived threat of violence this bill addresses; perhaps this body should focus on supporting the Enforcement of the Laws that are ALREADY A PART of the ORS?

This past year the Oregon State Police had to be called into the City of Portland, Multnomah County, on several occasions to help local Law Enforcement to address real Violence (Riots, Arsons, Attempted Murder, Murders, Property Destruction, Theft, Assaults, and Assault against Peace Officers) however, the Multnomah County District Attorney Office REFUSED to prosecute these very REAL CRIMES and defend the Public, the Businesses, and Government Employees directly affected by these criminal acts. The State Police were even refusing to return and assist the City/County because their Staff/Troopers were betrayed by the DA's Office's refusal to prosecute crimes committed against their Troopers. It took actually took FEDERAL ACTION (Troopers being Federal Deputized by the Marshalls Service) to provide those Troopers with the LEGAL PROTECTIONS that your body, this State Government, should have guaranteed them from the beginning.

My point about this and other likewise vacuous legislation is simple: We DO NOT NEED new laws to address non-issues, we need Legislators Brave Enough to Stand up for the ETHICAL action required to make the current laws on the books work for The People and we need oversight, management and legislation directed at REAL PROBLEMS and ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS. I ask you to please consider what a waste of time and resources this badly thought out, poorly crafted, and pointless bill is. Please kill this bill here and move on to more pressing and real matters facing The People. Thank you for your time and attention.