

SB 554 Testimony

Chair Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

I am writing this testimony in strong opposition to SB 554. I also attended the majority of the live testimony this morning and have several thoughts and concerns that I want to share.

SB 554 focuses solely on Concealed Handgun License (CHL) permit holders. CHL permit holders are some of the most law abiding of all citizens, committing felonies at a rate many times lower than the average citizen and in many cases lower than law enforcement officials.

This bill does not address open carry nor does it address anyone who is not eligible to obtain a CHL, including people convicted of felonies or children under the age of 21. However, most of the testimony that I heard today in support of SB 554 was focused on school shootings, most of which has been perpetrated by children or criminals, who are not legally allowed to carry concealed. Other testimony focused on intimidation resulting from open carry at protests and the state capitol. This bill does nothing to address those concerns. Instead its sole focus is the criminalization of law abiding gun owners who have never committed a crime and gone through background checks and firearms training.

Creating laws that allow for a patchwork of regulations and complete lack of clarity do not help protect citizens but instead create a less safe situation and can potentially criminalize individuals whose intent is to follow the law.

I sympathize with the concerns of those testifying on behalf of SB 554, specifically with regard to safety at our schools. I grew up in Douglas county and knew people who were greatly affected by the shooting at Umpqua Community College. If I thought that SB 554 would make schools or other public areas safer, I would be willing to make some compromises on where I can carry a firearm. However, this bill does not make schools safer and it can arguably make them less safe by allowing criminals to commit their crimes undeterred from law abiding gun owners.

I did some research in preparation for this testimony and was unable to find even one example where a CHL holder in Oregon committed a crime with their firearm in a public building, school, or airport. This bill does not address an existing problem but instead creates many more problems by creating confusion for people whose intent is to follow existing laws.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I strongly urge you to oppose this bill in its entirety.

Best Regards,

Matthew Snyder