



OREGON STATE SENATE

February 22, 2021

Senate Committee of the Judiciary and Ballot 110 Implementation  
900 Court Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Prozanski and Members of the Committee,

I write in opposition to Senate Bill 554.

At a time when violent crime is on the rise, the last thing the Legislature should be doing is pushing to curtail the right of self-defense. In Portland alone, in 2020, shootings doubled the 2019 number. SB 554 would do just that by restricting where and when law-abiding concealed handgun license (CHL) holders can defend themselves and others and create a patchwork of regulations that would criminalize some of the most upstanding citizens.

While proponents of the bill would have you believe that CHL holders pose a unique threat to society, I would prefer to follow the data. I urge the committee to do the same.

Research has shown that less than one, one-hundredth of 1% (.0074%) of Oregonians with a CHL have committed a felony. The majority of these crimes are unlikely to have involved a firearm. FBI data has revealed that someone with a concealed handgun license has stopped 3.5% of active shooter situations; other research has put that number as high as 16.5%. Right here in Oregon, a citizen with a CHL stopped the Clackamas Town Center shooter before more life was lost.

Thus, this bill is a "solution" in search of a problem. That is *not* to say gun violence isn't an issue worth addressing. It *is* to say that targeting CHL holders by restricting law-abiding citizen's ability to protect themselves and others has no basis in data, and making them criminals will do nothing to solve that issue.

Let me be clear, every victim of gun violence is a tragedy. Shootings in Portland radically increased last year, and in January alone, compared to last January, shootings nearly doubled. To my knowledge, none of those shootings have been perpetrated by a person with a CHL. To the contrary, CHL applications have significantly increased as citizens seek ways to protect themselves in the face of this new violence.

Lastly, SB 554 will increase the fees to obtain and renew a CHL license. This policy will have disproportionate impacts on low-income and minority communities. It will not deprive rich and middle-class people of the right of self-defense but will only serve to put that right out of reach for those who can no longer afford it.

I respectfully request that you table SB 554 and preserve the right to self-defense.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Hansell". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Bill Hansell  
Oregon State Senator  
District 29