

Background (Problem):

SB 554 attempts to solve the problem of gun violence in the state of Oregon by limiting the public spaces that concealed carry permit holders can have their guns through punitive actions, such as: Class C Felony, 5 years in prison, or \$125,000 fine.

Oregon is 38th in the nation for gun homicide, and whereas there is little evidence to suggest that concealed carry permit holders are at the root of this violence, SB 554 attempts to address individual concerns over gun safety. Individuals who are uneasy with concealed carry permit holders now have a route in which to lobby property holders, municipalities, and publicly owned spaces to create a “gun-free sanctuary.”

What the Bill Does (Solution):

However, this bill only applies to concealed carry permit-holders aka individuals who legally obtain training and education, pay special fees, provide thumbprints and background checks from state governments. Under the Constitution, Americans and Oregonians have a right to bear arms. Already, there exists laws, rules, and regulations governing how and when concealed carry permit holders can carry and those laws, rules, and regulations change from state to state. By creating more chaos, confusion, and obstacles to this system will undoubtedly cause unnecessary and potentially unsafe consequences.

Over 1,500 Oregon constituents have reached out to me personally, citing personal rights, public safety, and constitutional rights. Statewide punitive laws should make sense for the crime committed, but in regards to SB 554, individuals who are trying to abide by the system and legally carry are held accountable. Further, the consequences of this bill mean that an individual who has to stow away their firearm, after realizing a building no longer allows concealed carry, is now putting their firearm at risk of theft. Further, individuals with violent tendencies would target these “gun-free sanctuaries” as opportunities for violence knowing that no one is legally allowed to carry on their premises. SB 554 doesn't only not address gun violence, it creates an environment in which gun violence is much more horrific.

Regarding constitutional rights, such as voting or bearing arms, it's important to recognize that making something very difficult is the same as making it illegal. For instance, by creating a polling tax, restricting the hours polls are open, or only offering pamphlets in one language make it extremely difficult for some to vote and therefore infringe on your constitutional right to vote. The same logic can be used in relation to excessive rules and regulations that make carrying with a concealed permit impossible. You don't have to make something illegal to infringe upon someone's Constitutional Rights—you just have to make it too arduous for them to follow the rules.

Please oppose SB 554. It is a public safety fiasco waiting to happen, it punishes law-abiding Oregonians, and it puts undue regulations on our constitutional rights.

Representative Bobby Levy