

Chair and committee members,

These comments will follow up my earlier comments on SB 554. The testimony I heard in favor of the bill this morning reflected a great deal of fear and emotion. I empathize with those who are fearful of their safety; sometimes fear is a motivator for those who wish to carry personal protection, too. Nonetheless, the facts submitted are consistent and there is a clear dichotomy - comments in favor of the bill were directed against the violent use of weapons, but, your bill is directed against people who submit to the law and also wish to avoid violence, who would prefer to be prepared in the event of an emergency. In their desire to be prepared, these concealed carry permittees are much the same as any of us who wish to be as ready as possible for emergencies. They have taken the legal steps necessary for their preparation. This bill would seemingly harm people who would be your allies should there be a serious, unexpected and dangerous situation. Are we to draw a conclusion that the law-abiding citizens are not your allies? I appreciate Sen. Thatcher's question about the true motivation behind and goal of this legislation. The real purpose of the bill is curious, given its illogical focus on the people who have done the most to abide by existing expectations. Being able to make the distinction about a real threat is one critical aspect of handling a firearm. It would serve you well to demonstrate that ability here - being able to distinguish between a real threat (violence with weapons) and a false or inappropriate target (concealed carry permit holders).

In the interest of drawing Oregon back together, instead of deepening distrust, please do not pass this legislation. Let's address the concerns about unlawful and violent use of firearms by strengthening deterrence and encouraging helpful communication among all law-abiding Oregonians. Thank you.