

Submitter: Dacia Grayber
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB2572

Rep. Dacia Grayber Testimony for HB 2572

(Written record of verbal testimony to be presented in Committee)

The genesis of this bill began for me years ago as a student getting my degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management, with a focus on domestic extremism proliferation. In the years that followed, I, like many Oregonians, watched as extremism reached a flash point in our communities, occasionally boiling over to overt violence. An Oregon Secretary of State audit in 2022 found that in the previous decade, Oregon had witnessed the 6th highest number of domestic extremism incidents in the nation. Like many others, I grappled with the question—how do we work to bring the temperature down without infringing on civil liberties?

After researching and working with a variety of legal and constitutional experts, we have landed on a policy that I believe is the most constitutionally sound and focused approach to preventing the most egregious cases of political intimidation and violence, and hits at the core of what will prevent the next Charlottesville or January 6th. Indeed, the same legal basis for this policy was used in litigation after the initial Charlottesville riots and was effective in preventing further violence while still upholding people's constitutional rights.

I want to put in plain language what this bill is, and isn't.

This is not a gun bill. This does not infringe on the rights of individuals to open carry, nor does it limit your second amendment rights. As a gun owner and outdoor enthusiast, it's important to me that we work on a policy that would not infringe on these rights, and this is proven through the Supreme Court District of Columbia v. Heller decision as well.

This bill is not tied to any one political or partisan ideology. The policy applies to all incidences that meet the definition of paramilitary activity EQUALLY. Any claims to the contrary are at best misguided rhetoric and at worst attempting to play and feed people's fears with misinformation.

This bill does not limit self-defense clinics, shooting ranges and competition, historic re-enactments, or other state and federally protected activities, and in fact the bill DOES define these exceptions.

This bill does not do anything new as far as “outlawing” private paramilitary organizations. The Supreme Court has been clear since 1886 that the Constitution does NOT protect private paramilitary organizations.

Every Oregonian has the right to free speech and association, to petition the government, and to vote without fear of violence or intimidation. Private armed militia activity, despite being already prohibited, infringes on these rights. The reforms proposed by HB 2572 would make it harder for private paramilitaries to operate with impunity through Oregon, regardless of their ideology. The civil enforcement provision will empower everyday Oregonians to seek compensation for harm done to them by these groups. The focus on armed activity that interferes with government functions, usurps legitimate law enforcement authority, and infringes constitutional rights balances the protection of public safety with the preservation of constitutional guarantees. I do believe this bill has the potential to create a relief valve ahead of what could be increasingly violent political election cycles and keep our state from descending into further cycles of violence and chaos.

We have a unique opportunity to address this while we still have time, and do this right. No policy is perfect, and this one is no exception. I welcome robust questions and debate to ensure that what we move forward is the best possible policy, and again, am so grateful to ICAP, the team at the DOJ, and this committee and indeed every person that will have their voice heard here today whether they agree with me or not. That’s the beauty of the Democratic process, to be able to do so free of intimidation and violence as our fore-founders intended.