



March 21, 2023

Chair Kropf, Vice-Chairs Andersen and Wallan, and members of the House Judiciary Committee,

My name is Michael Smith. I am a resident of Multnomah County and currently serve as Chair of the Gun Owners Caucus of the Democratic Party of Oregon. I write today on behalf of the Gun Owners Caucus to express our support of HB 2006.

On March 3rd, the Caucus considered whether to support or oppose several bills before the State Legislature that pertain to firearms. Among these is HB 2006, restricting possession of certain longarms for persons under 21 years of age. The vote to support this bill was not unanimous, and this is a reflection of the concerns of some in the Caucus that this bill presents a slippery slope. I will explain further below.

As a Caucus, we seek to support gun laws that are supported by the best available research. The research demonstrates that persons under the age of 25 do not have fully developed brains, and their judgment may, therefore, be impaired. The research also shows that most of those committing school shootings are under the age of 21. To be clear, when compared to all gun violence, school shootings are an exceedingly rare form of gun violence, but they are also overwhelmingly traumatic, and, therefore, we support a law that is narrowly tailored to reduce and prevent the harm of school shootings. We believe that this law, which effectively sets the same age limit to own semi-automatic long arms that exists for handguns, will do that.

Even so, the Caucus is concerned that this narrowly tailored law will be an excuse to enact broader bans that are ill-considered and nowhere nearly as well-supported by the research. In particular, the Rand Corporation study on

Gun Violence In America shows that the *only* proven effect of a so-called "Assault Weapons Ban" would be to temporarily spike prices for "Assault Weapons." We would oppose such a ban on principle. We support responsible, safe gun ownership and we strongly urge the legislature to use the best available evidence to craft policy.

Respectfully submitted,

Michael Smith, Chair, DPO Gun Owners' Caucus