

Submitter: Jim OConnor
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure: HB2006

I strongly oppose HB 2006 because it takes no consideration of the positive benefits of youth participation in firearms events and activities. The bill is sponsored by members of the State Legislature who do not represent rural Oregon. If they did, they would understand that youth all over the State participate in youth shooting programs that promote firearms safety and skills. Youth all over our State hunt using firearms – all of this gains them valuable and irreplaceable life experience.

If you read the text of HB 2006, it's easy to see what the intent of the bill's sponsors is, which is to reduce gun violence committed by juveniles. However, there are currently laws that exist, such as ORS 166.220 – Unlawful Use of a Firearm. In part, this law reads, "A person commits the crime of unlawful use of a weapon if the person: (a) Attempts to use unlawfully against another, or carries or possesses with intent to use unlawfully against another, any dangerous or deadly weapon as defined in ORS 161.015..." This law is designed to stop an individual who possesses a firearm and intends to do harm with it. Isn't that what we're trying to accomplish? Do we need to prohibit sixteen-year-old from lawfully hunting in Burns? Are we really going to prohibit a seventeen-year-old from taking part in the State 4-H Shoot ?

By going forward with HB 2006, we punish the masses of youth around the state and deprive or severely limit them of opportunity to experience a fulfilling and enjoyable sport. Instead, let's focus on the laws that currently exist.