



CLATSOP COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

1190 SE 19th Street • Warrenton, OR 97146 • Mailing: P.O. Box 658 • Astoria, OR 97103

Testimony on HB 2006

Real World Effects to our Youth

In my capacity as the Sheriff of Clatsop County, I oppose HB 2006. In my capacity as a father and mentor to young hunters and shooting enthusiasts, I am even more strongly opposed. I object for many of the same reasons provided by the long list of individuals and organizations that have provided testimony. I note that these letters are primarily based upon legal interpretation, constitutional arguments and logic debates of fairness.

While there are many justified and valid arguments presented, I will take a different approach. Through true stories I hope to paint the picture how this proposed law will make what has for generations been fun, safe and legal traditions, a criminal action.

I harvested my first deer when I was 14 with my grandfather's rifle. It was a 1950's Remington 740 Woodsmaster, chambered in 30-06, with a fixed 4 power scope. I have many memories hunting with that rifle, all the more important since my grandfather passed when I was 17. My children know this rifle and what it means to me. Under this law, not only can my son or daughter not hunt with it, they can't even hold or shoot it, even under my supervision until they turn 21. Why? Because it is semi-automatic. Do you really want to make this illegal?

During COVID, many schools transitioned to online only learning. My son and a couple friends are active and wanted to get out of the house. They enjoy duck hunting and built a weatherproof blind in a local farmer's field. From the blind they attended online school. Not only were their academics excellent, but they were active and found a productive way to stay engaged socially. They all used semi-automatic shotguns, not only because they are nice tools, but felt recoil is less, a benefit for lightly built young people. Under HB 2006 this would be illegal.

My son saved to buy a shotgun of his own and chose a nice semi-automatic. He is 18 and a freshman at Oregon State University. He met new friends who also like to hunt ducks and has taken his shotgun to new places and new memories. Under HB 2006, he would have to forfeit his shotgun until he is 21 years old. I imagine to be legal we would have to go to a gun store to do a transfer from him to me. After a few weeks in the queue, it could become mine until I can transfer it back to him 2 years and 2 months from now. While we were there, he would have to buy a new shotgun which meets the requirements of the law so he could continue an outdoor sport he really enjoys. I find this completely unnecessary for public safety, yet it is a requirement under the law.

A peer of mine has enjoyed shooting trap and sporting clays with his sons for years. They have traveled the United States competing. Again, they use semi-automatic shotguns for the reduction in felt recoil. His younger son attends college in another state and is in ROTC. Under this law he couldn't legally bring his shotgun home with him. Is this what you want to make illegal?

MATTHEW D. PHILLIPS, SHERIFF

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Several years back a friend and I took a police officer's son deer hunting. Due to the officer's shift, there were limited options to take his son out. Luck and good eyes provided an opportunity to take a buck. The boy's scope was completely fogged and there was no chance he could shoot. I handed him my rifle which led to success. Under HB 2006, this would be an illegal transfer because I am not his parent or legal guardian. I can't imagine why this should be criminal.

The accounts I shared are not unique to me. They are repeated by families thousands of times throughout Oregon and our great nation. This law would primarily serve to extinguish traditions while having a negligible impact on gun violence.

It is ironic that education and awareness is the solution to all social ills, except for firearms. I believe all children should learn about firearms, with hands on learning in a safe environment. Some may never have interest in owning a firearm, but at least they will be informed. Eliminate the fascination through learned respect for firearms, how to use them safely, where and when. To this point, HB 2006 endangers education. Shooting clubs and youth shooting sports teams may end, because handing a club owned shotgun or rifle to a kid will be illegal. Handing the shotgun or rifle to the parent to give to their child won't work either, because the first transfer would be illegal. Hunter's Safety field day, a state requirement for youth to earn their hunter education certificate, will suffer the same fate. At field day the kids are required to demonstrate how to safely handle and fire a gun. For safety, firearms are provided, families don't bring their own.

Current law provides sufficient legal boundaries to protect our youth and society. The missing component, education, has to come from society. The elimination of entire classes of firearms for youth isn't reasonable or justifiable. I don't even think these firearms are the ones you are worried about, nearly all hold well less than 10 rounds. This law would have an economic effect on families at a time no one needs additional financial pressures. This law would stop traditions held by families for generations. I would be more than happy to testify in person if given the opportunity.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew D. Phillips".

Matthew D. Phillips, Sheriff

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