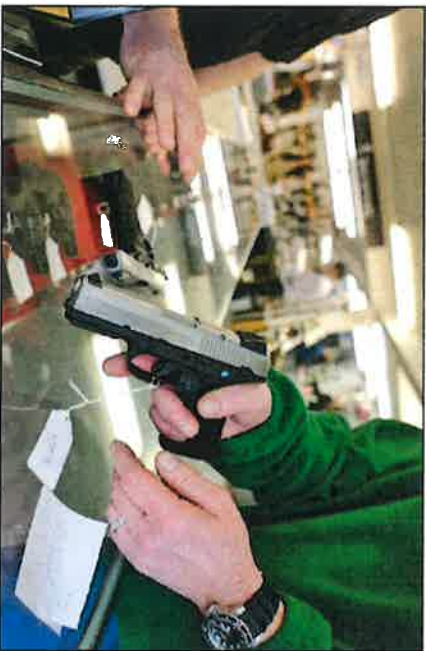


# Oregon needs to regulate gun sales; ATF can't

MY VIEW:  
PETE  
SANDROCK

Oregon has nearly 2,000 federally licensed gun dealers. They're supposed to be inspected and regulated by the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, known as ATF. But ATF is in crisis and can't do the job.

The Bureau has been understaffed for years. Instead of meeting its goal to inspect about 6,500 Oregon dealers a year, it has struggled to inspect 33. And about a third of those are typically tagged with violations like failing to document criminal background checks of buyers, failing to report the transfer of multiple handguns in single sales to individual buyers, or failing to account for lost or stolen inventory.



FILE PHOTO  
A column-writer says the federal bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives no longer can regulate gun sales, so Oregon must.

ATF's situation has gone from bad to worse. It's no longer just understaffing. Last fall Congress slashed its budget by \$200 million. In February ATF was ordered to focus its remaining resources on the U.S.-Mexico border. In April, ATF's leadership was inexplicably transferred to the Secretary of the Army who

was caught as much by surprise as ATF's senior leaders and experienced investigators. Bottom line: Oregon is on its own. If we don't regulate gun sales, it won't get done.

That's why it's important for Oregon's Legislature to pass House Bill 3076 to license, inspect, and train gun dealers how to spot gun trafficking.

**As a Vietnam veteran, I'm especially aware of the suicide risks facing my brothers and sisters who have served our nation. I want everyone from gun dealers to family members to recognize the signs and take action.**

As a former prosecutor for 25 years, I know that straw purchases have always been a problem. I witnessed countless scenes of firearm-inflicted murders, suicides and domestic violence. Only twice did I see cases in which guns were used properly in defense of self or others: one homeowner used a .22 caliber pistol; the other used a shotgun. In neither case were more than six rounds fired. Only one round hit the armed aggressor.

I own a gun. In high school, I completed an NRA hunter safety course. In college, I competed on the rifle team. My great grandparents were Oregon homesteaders who no doubt hunted with guns.

If properly regulated, gun dealers will be an important line of defense against deadly weapons falling into the wrong hands.

*Pete Sandrock is a Portland resident.*