

Submitter: Mark Neubauer

On behalf of: Myself and everyone who owns a firearm.

Committee: Senate Committee On Veterans, Emergency Management, Federal and World Affairs

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB947

In his address, George Mason posed a critical question regarding the composition of the militia: "*Who are the militia? They consist now of the whole people, except for a few public officers.*"¹ He continued, emphasizing that the militia encompasses every able-bodied man who is not a public officer. According to Mason, the security of a free state necessitates that the militia be both instructed and armed, capable of executing the laws of the union, suppressing insurrections, and repelling invasions. Furthermore, Mason asserted that to ensure the security of a free people, they must be armed and trained in the use of their arms.

This statement illustrates Mason's view that the militia should be composed of the general population, with certain public officials being the only exceptions.

Similarly, in his First Annual Address to Congress in 1790, President George Washington underscored the importance of an armed populace, stating: "*A free people ought not only to be armed, but disciplined... the militia, as the last resort, to which the people can appeal, is the palladium of our liberties, and that, for the security of a free constitution... to repel the invasions of foreign enemies, and to secure the public tranquility against domestic factions and insurrections.*"² Washington's words reflect a clear and unequivocal belief in the necessity of a well-armed militia, composed of the people, to preserve liberty and safeguard the nation's freedoms.

Drawing on the statements of both Mason and Washington, I argue that Senators Manning Jr., Meek, Woods, and Prozanski are not only attempting to alter the fundamental language embedded in our Constitution and laws, but also contradict the public positions historically held within their own political party. By suggesting that "the people" are not the militia and that the Second Amendment does not apply to citizens, these senators appear to be undermining a critical aspect of our constitutional heritage.

The Founding Fathers chose their words with precision and purpose. The language used in the Constitution and subsequent legal frameworks is far from random. It was carefully crafted to empower the citizens with the right to bear arms—not only for personal defense, but also to protect against potential government overreach. The idea that the people must be armed, both for self-defense and for the defense of the state, is a cornerstone of our nation's founding principles.

Moreover, Article 1, Section 27 of the Oregon Constitution explicitly states: "*The People shall have the right to bear arms for the defence (sic) of themselves, and the State, but the Military shall be kept in strict subordination to the civil power.*"³ This clear language reinforces the notion that "the people" are entitled to the right to bear arms.

¹ George Mason, Virginia ratifying convention, June 4th 1788

² President George Washington, Congressional address, January 8th 1790

³ Oregon Constitution

Senate Bill 947, in its current form, represents a deliberate attempt to alter the foundational language and reinterpret the intent of the framers. This bill is part of a broader effort to redefine who can and cannot possess firearms, potentially undermining the rights granted to citizens by both the U.S. and Oregon Constitutions.

I strongly urge this body to reject this bill at this stage and bring it to an immediate halt.

Sincerely,

Mark Neubauer