

Submitter: Jeff Thompson
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3076

One could argue that HB 3076 is an unnecessary step toward overregulation, given that federal law already governs firearm dealers through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). Licensed dealers must comply with extensive background checks, record-keeping, and inspections under the Gun Control Act of 1968. Adding a state-level licensing program risks duplicating efforts, creating redundant bureaucracy, and imposing additional costs on small businesses without clear evidence that current federal oversight is inadequate.

Another concern is the potential for mission creep. While the bill currently calls for a study, opponents might fear it's a precursor to mandatory state licensing, which could disproportionately burden rural gun dealers. Oregon's rural communities often rely on small, independent firearm retailers for hunting and self-defense needs. Extra fees or compliance requirements could drive these dealers out of business, reducing access for law-abiding citizens while doing little to address illegal gun trafficking, which often bypasses licensed dealers entirely.

Critics could also point to the timing and scope of the study. With a deadline of December 2026, the Department of Justice would have less than two years to produce a comprehensive analysis, potentially leading to rushed or superficial conclusions. Moreover, the bill doesn't specify what problems the study aims to solve—whether it's public safety, dealer accountability, or something else—leaving its purpose vague and open to political interpretation rather than data-driven outcomes.

Finally, opponents might argue that Oregon's resources would be better spent elsewhere. The state faces pressing issues like housing shortages, wildfire recovery, and behavioral health crises, as evidenced by other 2025 legislative priorities. Diverting funds and attention to a study that may not yield actionable improvements in gun safety—especially when illegal firearms, not licensed dealers, are often tied to crime—could be seen as a misallocation of effort.