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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB696

The need to provide security to the citizenry of any state is an absolute necessity, as such security is a duty owed by any government to its people. To that end, the spirit of SB 696 is well founded. However, it is equally crucial that such protective measures be scrutinized heavily so as to not permit flagrant dismissal of the fundamental right of the pursuit of happiness. From the perspective of an individual knowledgeable in the usage and ownership of firearms, this law creates a completely arbitrary restriction that in no way serves to protect the general public, and only creates yet another swath of victimless criminals.

Firstly, the mechanisms described herein are not all inclusive. To randomly pick a limited handful of ease-of-use features and declare them criminal without taking the time to more thoroughly address the specific concern is wasteful, neglectful, and a disservice to the community. This is comparable to criminalizing the ownership of four door vehicles as a means to reduce drunk driving fatalities; while the intent is fine and well, this execution is functionally meaningless.

Second, these items do not accelerate the rate of fire a firearm is capable of experiencing beyond what is possible using manufacture, which renders the entire premise of the law so broadly vague that to even bring it before a court would be inviting countless wasted hours from the states budget fighting senseless battles. If I can demonstrate my ability to perform "bump-fire" operation without mechanical aid, would that in turn render me completely exempt from this law? How thousands of hours in hundreds of cases should the courts waste finding out? This is a matter that should not be in question by the time a law like this takes effect, such questions should be identified and addressed here while the law remains a bill in progress.

Third, this bill offers the average citizen no additional protections from gun violence. The national institute of health, the FBI, and the Bureau of Justice Statistics are very clear on this. The fact of that matter is that firearm violence represents a very small portion of all violent crime. Beyond that, automatic weapons and large volume of fire simply does not appear as a significant factor. Chasing down these hobbyist modifications targets an objectively miniscule subgroup of an already objectively small percentage of an issue, therefore reducing the scope of positive impact to such a small group that Oregonians will not experience a safer life. To strip away the rights of one group can be a necessary evil, as the exercising of my rights should never come at the expense of yours, but one must weigh the societal reward against the penalty with each of these restrictions and the reward is objectively not present here.

My last major consideration for this law, a point that I have touched on earlier, is that the criminal justice system in Oregon is massively over encumbered. 911 service have hold times in some municipalities, and Police lack the resources to respond to even some high priority crimes night after night in areas like Portland. The drug epidemic is completely unchecked, retail theft has reached a point of being functionally decriminalized by means of under enforcement, and I am expected to support dedicating hundreds or even thousands of police hours on wild goose chases against hobbyist noise makers? I had to risk my own life interceding in a car theft because Portland Police Bureau could not prioritize my call for help, but I am expected to believe it is in my best interests to criminalize what most generally tends to be middle-aged men making objectionable noise in the woods? This measure completely dismisses genuine needs that are not being met, and reads as complete ignorance to the needs of public safety.

This bill does not help Oregon, it harms a portion of the community, and it actively blocks other far more valuable efforts to provide for the public safety.