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Public Safety Ways & Means Sub Committee
Joint Committee on Ways & Means

OREGON STATE LEGISLATURE
900 COURT ST NE SALEM, OREGON 97301

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Good afternoon, Chair Prozanski and Vice-Chair Thatcher, for your record, I am Senator David Brock Smith Senate District 1 representing Curry, Coos & Douglas Counties, southwest Oregon's fish, farm and forestry. As the Senate Republican Deputy Leader and on behalf of the Senator Republican Caucus, we oppose SB 243 and the gut and stuff -1 amendment.

Colleagues, this bill is extremely problematic, not just because it very potentially violates both the Oregon Constitution and United States Constitution's 2nd Amendment, but also because it will negatively impact the very people the proponents say it will protect.

Oregon has a great group of youth and young adults who participate in sport shooting, hunting, and other recreational activities. The age requirements in this bill will prevent many from taking part in these activities and learning how to properly handle firearms and respect their use. That is an issue.

The gut and stuff -1 Amendment contains many ambiguities, including broad definitions, unclear instructions around the firearm training requirements and unclear why some lines were drawn for who is exempt to this bill, and why not others. That's an issue, especially when we are talking about passing laws that affect anyone's rights under our fundamental rights under the 2nd Amendment.

I do not want to diminish the issues that our society faces, in Oregon between 2019 and 2023, of the fatal firearm injuries in our state, 77% were related to suicide. That is an issue, and I'd encourage all of us to look at what is leading to this mental health crisis in our state. What ways can we invest in our mental health care system and stem the causes that are leading to so many wanting to seek to end their lives. It is a tragedy.

However, I do not believe that this bill is the solution to that problem.

Respectfully,

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