



To Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary,

We are members of the Multnomah Democrats' Criminal Justice Study Group and we write to you as Oregonians, residents of the City of Portland, and concerned citizens. We strongly support, and urge you to pass, **SB 243** with the proposed amendments, which would adopt meaningful, evidence-based solutions, narrowly tailored to improve safe and responsible firearm ownership, while directly and effectively addressing some of the many factors contributing to the gun violence epidemic in our state. SB 243 would:

1. **Require gun dealers to wait 72 hours after requesting a criminal background check before transferring a firearm.** Oregon currently has no law requiring a waiting period between firearm purchase and delivery. A waiting period is more than a mere regulatory requirement, it supports safer and responsible gun ownership by introducing a “cooling off” period between the purchase and transfer of a firearm, which has been shown to significantly reduce both firearm homicide and suicide attempts by giving individuals additional time to reconsider actions. Waiting periods also support law enforcement, by granting federal agencies sufficient time to thoroughly and accurately verify the buyer’s eligibility, cross-check criminal national criminal records and mental health flags, and investigate potential discrepancies or outdated information. SB 243-1, Section 1 would not change the current requirement for dealers to request a background check, but without a waiting period, firearms can sometimes be transferred before adequate review can be completed.
2. **Ban rapid fire activators.** Oregon currently has no law banning the ownership, use, or sale of rapid-fire activators, such as “bump stocks”. A bump stock is the type of device used in the 2017 massacre in Las Vegas, NV, in which a lone shooter fired more than 1,000 rounds in less than 10 minutes, murdering 60 people and wounding at least 413 others, making it the deadliest massacre in modern US history. Oregon is one of 26 states which currently allow civilians with the proper federal license, to own fully automatic firearms under the 1934 National Firearms Act (NFA). SB 243-1, Section 2 would not change the legality of fully automatic firearms covered under the NFA; any person who has a lawfully registered, fully automatic firearm is explicitly excluded from the ban on rapid-fire activators. However, rapid-fire activators enable a shooter to make a semi-automatic firearm fire as if it were fully automatic, thus bypassing our current licensing requirements on the ownership of fully automatic firearms.
3. **Raise the age of lawful purchase/possession of certain firearms to 21 and limits the types of firearms that may be possessed by individuals 18-20 years of age.** Currently Oregon law generally allows civilians 18 years of age or older, to purchase and possess firearms, and the law does not distinguish the types of firearms one may possess based on age. SB 243-1, Section 3-4 would raise to 21 the age for possession of certain firearms, including handguns. Importantly, this law does not prohibit a minor from possessing a firearm (other than a handgun) if the firearm was transferred to the minor by the minor’s parent or guardian, or by another person with the consent of the minor’s parent or guardian. This ensures that parents remain free to transfer and give their children firearms, if they choose to do

so. This law also does not prohibit a minor from temporarily possessing a firearm for hunting, target practice, or for any other lawful purpose. Moreover, this law also retains the current 18-year age requirement for, and adds no new prohibition to, the ownership of a wide variety of legitimate hunting rifles and shotguns.

4. **Enable cities, counties, and districts to individually determine whether firearm possession, including concealed carry, should be prohibited from public buildings.** Current Oregon law already prohibits the possession, including concealed carry, of firearms in certain State and Federal public buildings. SB 243-1, Section 7 would extend and make clear the power of any city, county, or district, to adopt similar prohibitions in their public buildings. This law does not require city, county, or district governing bodies to prohibit firearm possession in public buildings, and there will be no changes for those that elect not to adopt such restrictions. However, this law would require notice and posting requirements from any governing body that does adopt such restrictions.

We urge you to pass SB 243 with these amendments, based on an objective analysis of these facts:

- From 2013 to 2022 the firearm death rate in Oregon increased 31%<sup>1</sup>
- Firearms are used in the majority of homicides (73%) and suicides (54%)<sup>2</sup>
- Waiting periods that delay the purchase of firearms by a few days reduce gun homicides by roughly 17%<sup>3</sup>
- A study of people incarcerated for crimes committed with firearms found that 17% of them would have been prohibited from buying a gun if their state had a law that raised the minimum age to possess a handgun to 21 years.<sup>4</sup>
- People ages 18-20 are responsible for a disproportionate share of school shootings<sup>5</sup> and, although they comprise just 4% of the US population, they account for 18% of known gun homicides<sup>6</sup>

Collectively, the key provisions of SB 243 with these amendments, are narrowly focused and fact-based, while creating minimal impact to the lawful possession of firearms in our state. For all of these reasons we strongly urge you to pass SB 243 with these common-sense amendments.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death Age-adjusted Gun Deaths and Rates per 100,000

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> M. Luca, D. Malhotra, & C. Poliquin, Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 114 (46) 12162-12165  
<https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1619896114>

<sup>4</sup> Vittes; "Legal status and source of offenders' firearms in states with the least stringent criteria for gun ownership";  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22729164/>

<sup>5</sup> Reeping, Journal of School Violence, 2022) <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35449898/>

<sup>6</sup> Giffords Law Center analysis of FBI Supplementary Homicide Report (SHR) data, 2016-2020

[https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/minimum-age/#footnote\\_5\\_5627](https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/minimum-age/#footnote_5_5627)