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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB243

Oregon Senate Bill 243-1 proposes sweeping changes to firearm regulations, including a 72-hour waiting period, bans on certain firearm accessories, and restrictions on gun ownership for individuals under 21. While the bill is presented as a public safety measure, it underscores the failures of government oversight and enforcement. Below is a detailed critique of SB 243-1, focusing on how poor governance undermines its goals.

Oregon already has some of the most stringent gun control laws in the nation, yet the state struggles to enforce them effectively. SB 243-1 adds new layers of regulation without addressing systemic enforcement issues. For example, illegal firearm trafficking and unregulated private sales remain significant problems that this bill does not address. Without improving enforcement mechanisms, additional regulations will primarily burden law-abiding citizens while failing to curb criminal activity.

The proposed 72-hour waiting period highlights the inefficiency of Oregon's background check system. Delays in processing background checks are already common due to underfunding and lack of resources. Introducing mandatory waiting periods—even for individuals who pass their checks immediately—creates unnecessary obstacles for responsible gun owners while doing little to prevent impulsive or illegal purchases.

SB 243-1 focuses on regulating legal firearm owners rather than targeting the root causes of gun violence, such as mental health crises and illegal firearms trafficking. This misallocation of resources reflects poor governance priorities. Lawmakers should invest in mental health services, community safety programs, and initiatives to combat illegal gun sales instead of imposing further restrictions on lawful owners.

The bill's language regarding firearm accessories and gun-free zones is overly broad and poorly defined, creating confusion for both citizens and law enforcement. Poorly written laws often lead to inconsistent enforcement and legal challenges, further eroding public trust in government institutions. For example, banning "rapid-fire devices" without clear definitions risks criminalizing lawful accessories used for recreational shooting or hunting.

The government's failure to hold bad actors accountable undermines the effectiveness of existing regulations. Lawmakers should focus on improving accountability measures within law enforcement and regulatory agencies.

To effectively reduce gun violence without infringing on constitutional rights or creating unnecessary burdens for lawful gun owners, Oregon should focus on fixing systemic governance issues:

1. **Enhance Enforcement of Current Laws:** Allocate resources to crack down on illegal firearms trafficking and ensure compliance with existing regulations.
2. **Modernize Background Check Systems:** Invest in technology and staffing to streamline background checks and reduce delays.
3. **Target Root Causes:** Fund mental health services, community safety programs, and education initiatives to address the underlying drivers of gun violence.
4. **Improve Oversight:** Conduct regular audits of firearm dealers and implement stricter penalties for non-compliance.
5. **Clarify Legislation:** Ensure that any new laws are clearly written to avoid confusion and unintended consequences.

## Conclusion

Oregon Senate Bill 243-1 reflects a flawed approach rooted in poor government oversight rather than effective policymaking. By failing to address enforcement gaps, bureaucratic inefficiencies, and resource misallocation, the bill risks alienating responsible citizens while doing little to enhance public safety. Lawmakers should prioritize fixing governance issues and focusing on targeted interventions that address the root causes of gun violence instead of introducing overly broad regulations that exacerbate existing problems.