



March 27, 2025

Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
Oregon State Capitol
Salem, Oregon
Re: Ceasefire Oregon supports SB 243-1

Dear Senate Prozanski and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Ceasefire Oregon supports SB 243-1. Gun violence is the leading cause of death for kids and teens (17 and under) in the United States. SB 243-1 will help reduce death and injury for our children and all Oregonians.

Waiting periods reduce gun homicides and gun suicides; more than 75% of all Oregon firearm-related deaths are suicides.

- “Waiting period laws that delay the purchase of firearms by a few days reduce gun homicides by roughly 17%.” M. Luca, D. Malhotra, & C. Poliquin, Handgun waiting periods reduce gun deaths, Proc. Natl. Acad. Sci. U.S.A. 114 (46) 12162-12165, <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1619896114> (2017).
- “A subgroup analysis also found a significant 9-percent reduction in firearm suicide rates among older victims in states that introduced waiting periods.” [RAND Gun Policy in America](#).
- Some people claim that women are particularly at risk of violence from abusive partners when they cannot access firearms on demand. That view fails to understand the realities of intimate partner violence and fails to consider the many tools available to women—to everyone—who are concerned about safety. The state of [Oregon provides laws](#) that require abusers to be disarmed and allow other actions to be taken to keep the abuser away. These tools include Domestic Violence Restraining Orders and Extreme Risk Protection Orders.
- Additionally, studies indicate that waiting periods actually reduce the rate of domestic violence. In a 2009, Roberts found that “a waiting period of between two and seven days significantly lowered total and firearm-specific intimate partner homicide rates compared with no waiting period,” ([RAND 2024](#))
- *Silvester v. Becerra* (2018) – The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld California’s 10-day waiting period, ruling that it did not violate the Second Amendment. The Supreme Court declined to hear the case, leaving the Ninth Circuit’s ruling in place.
- *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (2010) – While this case incorporated the Second Amendment against state and local governments, it did not address waiting periods

specifically. However, the decision acknowledged that some gun regulations, such as background checks and restrictions for felons, are permissible.

- District of Columbia v. Heller (2008) – This case struck down Washington, D.C.’s handgun ban but stated that some gun regulations, including “longstanding prohibitions” and conditions on commercial sales, are constitutional. While it did not address waiting periods directly, it left room for reasonable regulations.

Rapid fire activators are weapons of war and do not belong in our communities, schools, houses of worship, or streets.

- The main difference between a fully automatic gun and a semi-automatic gun is that a fully automatic gun fires continuously when the trigger is held down or pulled, while a semi-automatic gun fires one bullet per trigger pull.
- Fully automatic firearms are legal in Oregon under the 1934 National Firearms Act. ([ATF](#)) This bill would not change the legality of fully automated firearms covered under the NFA. This bill addresses rapid fire activators.
- Rapid fire activators enable a shooter to make a semi-automatic firearm fire as if it were a fully automatic firearm. A rapid fire activator was used by the shooter in the October 1, 2017 massacre in Las Vegas to kill 60 people and injure 413 more with gun firearm or shrapnel. More than 450 other people received non-firearm-related injuries in the shooting.
- The massacre, the most deadly in American history, occurred while Donald Trump was the US President. After the Las Vegas massacre, Mr. Trump banned bump stocks but his own Supreme Court struck down that ban in 2024. ([CNN](#))
- Similarly, in Gun Owners of America v. Garland (2022), the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals addressed challenges to the ATF’s bump stock ban. The Supreme Court’s refusal to grant certiorari meant that the lower court’s ruling remained effective.
- While the Supreme Court has not issued a definitive ruling on the constitutionality of bans on rapid-fire activators, its choice not to review these cases allows the lower court decisions upholding such bans to remain in effect.

Raising the age to 21 to possess most firearms will reduce gun violence.

- In National Rifle Association v. Bondi, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit upheld Florida’s law prohibiting individuals under 21 from purchasing firearms. This statute was enacted following the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting to enhance public safety. ([US 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, NRA v Bondi](#)) The court determined that Florida’s age restriction aligns with the nation’s historical tradition of firearm regulation. It noted that, historically, minors lacked the legal capacity to enter contracts, which included purchasing firearms. Additionally, the court observed that early regulations often limited firearm access for individuals under 21, reflecting longstanding public safety concerns. ([US 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, NRA v Bondi](#)) The court concluded that Florida’s law is consistent with the Second Amendment, as it

imposes conditions on the commercial sale of firearms to a specific age group based on historical precedents.

- A study of offenders incarcerated for crimes committed with firearms found that 17% of offenders 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. (Vittes, [Injury Prevention](#), 2013)
- When Washington State raised the minimum age to purchase assault weapons, the state saw significant decreases in the number of firearm incidents with assault weapons by this group, as well as an overall decrease in firearm violence in the state. ([Bhullar Am Surg](#), 2024)
- People ages 18 to 20 are responsible for a disproportionate share of school shootings, (Reeping, [Journal of School Violence](#), 2022) public mass shootings ([Schildkraut](#) 2021) and gun homicides overall. In fact, 18-20 year olds comprise just 4% of the US population, but account for 17% of known gun homicide offenders. ([Giffords and FBI SHR](#))
- Data also suggests that young people disproportionately commit gun homicides. For example, 18-20-year olds comprise just 4% of the US population, but account for 17% of known homicide offenders. ([Giffords and FBI SHR](#))
- Because impulse regulation and emotional control continues to develop into the mid-20s, young people, including adolescents and people under age 21, are at elevated risk of attempting suicide.

Cities, counties, and districts can control who is bringing loaded, hidden guns into public buildings.

- Cities, counties, districts or other entities that are defined as municipal corporations may adopt a policy prohibiting the carrying of concealed firearms even if the person carrying a firearm has a valid Oregon concealed handgun license. That policy can include the building, the grounds adjacent to the building or controlled by the city, county, district or municipal entity.
- A few concealed carry firearm permit holders believe their presence is enough to deter shootings. That is a deadly misconception. A 2021 article in [JAMA Open Network](#) found **“armed guards were not associated with significant reduction in rates of injuries; in fact, controlling for the aforementioned factors of location and school characteristics, the rate of deaths was 2.83 times greater in schools with an armed guard present.”**
- The same study further found **“An armed officer on the scene was the number one factor associated with increased casualties after the perpetrators’ use of assault rifles or submachine guns.”**
- Gun-free zones give law enforcement officers the tools to remove an armed person from a building before an altercation becomes violent.
- All the guns in Texas did not prevent the massacre of 22 children in Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.
- Finally, the US has more than 400 million firearms in civilian hands. If the presence of firearms actually reduced crime, the US would be the safest country in the world. We are

not. In fact, gunshot wound is the leading cause of death of kids and teens in the US.
([Johns Hopkins](#) and [KFF](#))

Most shootings do not occur in gun free zones. The following is from Devin Hughes, founder of GVPedia:

The claim that mass shooters overwhelmingly attack gun-free zones — loosely defined as areas where civilians are not allowed to carry firearms — is ubiquitous in pro-gun circles and cited by right-wing [celebrities](#), [organizations](#), [legislators](#), and even by former President [Donald Trump](#). The assertion is used to justify a carte-blanche rejection of stronger gun safety measures as well as [legislation](#) to eliminate areas where people are not allowed to currently carry firearms. This even includes efforts to [arm teachers](#), such as a recently passed Tennessee law. The heart of the gun-free zone talking point and legislative efforts stemming from it comes from the work of pro-gun commentator John Lott, who has claimed that between 94-98% of public mass shootings occur in gun-free zones. Along with popularizing his research in pro-gun circles, Lott himself has used the claim in [testimony](#) in front of Congress and state legislatures, as well as in [amicus briefs](#) for important court cases, including one currently ongoing in California.

However, despite its ubiquity, Lott's gun-free zone research is severe academic malfeasance and littered with numerous other errors. Here is why.

In an [investigation](#) originally published on [July 2, 2019](#), GVPedia uncovered that in one of Lott's [spreadsheets](#) he claimed that since 1950 there were 320 public mass shootings which were divided into three periods:

1950 to 1976 — 7 mass shootings

1977 to 1997 — 247 mass shootings

1998 to May 24, 2018 — 66 mass shootings

However, additional digging revealed that Lott's entire claim that 98% of mass shootings occur in gun-free zones rested on a massive, yet basic, error: for 1977–1997, Lott counted each individual death in mass shootings as an entire mass shooting for the overwhelming majority of shootings he lists.

For example, Lott's own spreadsheet indicated that there were 14 mass shootings where four or more people died in Oklahoma in 1986. Yet there weren't 14 mass shootings in Oklahoma that year, [just one](#) in which 14 people were killed.

Immediately after publication of GVPedia's report on July 2, 2019, Lott [denied](#) the existence of any error. However, in a [covert update](#) on July 6th, Lott revised his claimed number of mass shootings to the following:

1950 to 1976 — 7 mass shootings (no change)

1977 to 1997 — 50 mass shootings (down from 247)

1998 to May 24, 2018 — 74 mass shootings (up from 66)

In the time since Lott changed his data, he has asserted that any fluctuation in the percentage of mass shootings occurring in gun-free zones is due to new shootings occurring. Lott has accused GVPedia of [fabrications and denied](#) our findings. As Lott's own spreadsheets prove, however, Lott knew there was an error.

Importantly, Lott provided no public acknowledgement of the error and publicly defamed GVPedia – both of which point to a willful intent to deceive and a deliberate cover-up of any sign of data manipulation.

In 2022, Lott issued an [update](#) claiming that the percentage of mass shootings in gun-free zones had increased, despite his underlying data showing a substantial decrease. The discrepancy resulted because Lott actually *reintroduced* the error GVPedia identified in 2019. This error has continued to persist in Lott's updates in [2023](#) and [2024](#).

Lott no longer makes the spreadsheets with his data for 1950-1997 publicly available. Reviewers have to use Lott's original 2018 post to find the data proving that his current gun-free zone assertions are fraudulent.

To review:

- From 2014 to 2019, Lott claimed 98% of mass shootings occurred in gun-free zones
- In 2019, GVPedia found that Lott was counting individual mass shooting fatalities from 1977 to 1997 as entire mass shootings
- Four days after GVPedia's report, Lott changed the number of mass shootings from 1977-1997 from 247 to 50.
- Lott publicly claimed there was never an error and falsely accused GVPedia of fabrications
- Since 2022 to the present, Lott once again counts individual mass shooting fatalities from 1977-1997 as entire mass shootings
- Lott's error artificially boosts the claimed percentage of mass shootings occurring in gun-free zones

John Lott's pattern of behavior clearly demonstrates that he knew his gun-free zone claim was false, or at the very least, he was reckless as to its truth.

Lott regularly touts himself as an expert on gun violence statistics, and has been called as such to provide testimony in front of legislatures and courts across the country. Lott's research has been relied on in [crafting legislation](#) and in [court decisions](#). Lott's pattern of behavior combined with the continuing importance of his claims fits under definitions of both [academic fraud](#) and legal [fraud](#).

In addition to the fraudulent data manipulation, Lott's gun-free zone research is filled with numerous other errors. For example:

- Lott falsely claims shootings such as those in [Buffalo, NY](#), [Allen, TX](#), [Hialeah, FL](#), and [Umpqua, OR](#) occurred in gun-free zones, despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.
- Lott dubiously classifies shootings such as those at the [University of Texas, Parkland, WA](#), [Washington Naval Yard](#), and [Orlando, FL](#) that involved actual gun battles during the shootings as gun-free zones.
- Lott incorrectly excludes mass shootings such as those in [Mount Airy, NC](#), [Skagit County, WA](#), [Geneva County, AL](#), [Odessa, TX](#), [Meteor, WA](#). The shooting in Mount Airy he falsely

claims was gang related, and the other four are listed in the FBI's [active shooter report](#) – the report which Lott claims his mass shootings definition is based on.

These errors merely represent the tip of the iceberg, and a more detailed audit of Lott's research would undoubtedly uncover many more errors and distortions.

Given the high-profile nature of Lott's gun-free zone claim and those who repeat it, it was inevitable that professional fact checkers would conduct their own analyses. Indeed, over the years the [Associated Press](#), [Washington Post](#), [Politifact](#), [Factcheck.org](#), and even local papers such as [AZCentral](#) have all investigated Lott's claim.

Disappointingly, while each of the articles highlighted specific errors with Lott's work, all of them concluded with a rating of "half-true" or a similar metric. None of the fact checkers looked at Lott's underlying spreadsheets to verify that his provided data actually supported his claims. Further, the AP and AZCentral fact checks also appeared after GVPedia released its findings on Lott's initial error, meaning the information was even easier to find.

Lott's fraud and errors are not small, and they collapse a foundational pillar of the gun lobby's [Firehose of Falsehood](#). Legislation and court cases across the country are influenced by this fraudulent claim, and it is also distorting the public discussion around firearm policy.

Unfortunately, the public has not been able to rely on professional fact checkers to catch and report this data manipulation, so the disinformation has been allowed to spread largely unimpeded. This is also not the first time Lott has engaged in academic malfeasance of this and other kinds – as Armed With Reason and GVPedia have [documented](#) extensively, and as was profiled by the [New Yorker](#).

The status quo of ignoring Lott's gun-free zone claims or even granting them credibility must end. Any outlets that have published Lott's fraudulent gun-free zones claims should retract those stories. While repudiating and removing this talking point from the public discourse is only one step in countering the gun lobby's Firehose of Falsehood, it is essential.

Ceasefire Oregon urges you to support SB 243-1.

Thank you,

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