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On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB698

Senate Bill 698, which limits concealed carry in public buildings, risks undermining public safety while penalizing responsible gun owners. Licensed CHL holders undergo rigorous background checks and are statistically less likely to commit crimes than the general population. By expanding gun-free zones, SB 698 disarms law-abiding citizens in spaces where police response may be delayed, leaving them vulnerable during emergencies.

Criminals, by definition, ignore laws—gun-free zones only deter those already complying with regulations. Historical precedents (e.g., school shootings, mall attacks) show such policies fail to stop violent actors. Instead of restricting CHL holders, lawmakers should focus on prosecuting repeat offenders and illegal firearm possession.

The bill's unintended consequences could heighten risks: fewer armed citizens mean fewer deterrents against mass shooters. It may also discourage CHL applications, reducing the number of trained, vetted individuals capable of lawful defense. Oregon should prioritize enforcing existing laws against violent crime rather than eroding constitutional rights. Responsible gun ownership, not expanded restrictions, aligns with public safety.