

Submitter:

Chelsea Bearden

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB697

I oppose SB 697 because it unfairly targets responsible young adults and infringes on their constitutional rights. By broadly prohibiting individuals under the age of 21 from possessing firearms—with only narrow exceptions—this bill punishes law-abiding citizens rather than addressing the root causes of gun violence.

At 18, individuals are considered legal adults. They can vote, serve in the military, pay taxes, sign contracts, and be held fully accountable under the law. To deny them the right to lawfully possess a firearm is not only inconsistent—it's unjust. Many 18 to 20-year-olds are hunters, competitive shooters, or individuals seeking to protect themselves and their families. This bill strips them of that fundamental right based solely on age, not conduct.

While SB 697 includes limited exceptions, they are far too narrow and do not account for the diverse and legitimate reasons young adults may need access to firearms. Instead of focusing on responsible gun ownership, this bill casts a wide net that criminalizes ordinary behavior among law-abiding citizens.

True public safety comes from education, enforcement of existing laws, and addressing mental health and crime—not from blanket bans that undermine individual freedoms. I urge lawmakers to oppose SB 697 and stand up for the rights of responsible young adults.