

Submitted to the Oregon Senate Committee on Rules, April 5, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

I am writing as a concerned Oregonian to strongly oppose Senate Bill 698. While I understand the intent behind this legislation may be framed as a public safety measure, I believe it represents an overreach that infringes on the rights of law-abiding citizens and fails to address the root causes of the issues it claims to target. I urge you to reject this bill and consider alternative approaches that respect individual freedoms while promoting genuine safety.

One of my primary objections to SB 698 is the process by which it has gained traction. It has come to my attention that groups like Moms Demand Action are exerting undue influence over the legislative discourse surrounding this bill. Specifically, I've heard from fellow citizens that Moms Demand Action requires its members to submit their testimony to the organization for approval before it can be posted or shared publicly. This practice raises serious questions about transparency and authenticity in the public comment process. If true, it suggests that what we're hearing in support of SB 698 may not reflect the unfiltered views of Oregonians but rather a curated narrative shaped by an advocacy group with a clear agenda. This undermines the integrity of the democratic process and casts doubt on the legitimacy of the support this bill appears to have.

Beyond this procedural concern, I oppose SB 698 on its merits. The bill's proposed restrictions—whether they involve raising the age for firearm purchases, imposing waiting periods, or other limitations—disproportionately burden law-abiding individuals without evidence that they will meaningfully reduce crime. Criminals, by definition, do not follow laws, and piling additional regulations on responsible citizens only creates obstacles for those who pose no threat. Oregon's existing laws already provide a framework for safety; what we need is better enforcement, not more rules that penalize the innocent.

Moreover, I worry about the broader implications of this bill. It sets a precedent for eroding Second Amendment rights under the guise of safety, a pattern we've seen too often. As an Oregonian who values both liberty and security, I believe we can address public safety through community-based solutions—like mental health support and education—rather than blanket restrictions that treat everyone as a potential threat.

I implore you to listen to the voices of Oregonians who oppose SB 698, not just those filtered through advocacy groups like Moms Demand Action. Please reject this bill and focus on policies that unite us rather than divide us. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Harald Thomas  
Portland, OR