

Testimony Against Oregon Senate Bill 697  
Submitted to the Oregon Senate Committee on Rules, April 5, 2025

Dear Members of the Senate Committee on Rules,

I am writing as an Oregon resident to voice my strong opposition to Senate Bill 697. This legislation, while perhaps presented as a well-meaning effort to enhance safety, strikes me as an unnecessary and burdensome measure that encroaches on personal freedoms without delivering meaningful solutions. I urge you to reconsider this bill and reject it in favor of policies that address real problems without overstepping into the lives of law-abiding citizens.

A significant concern I have with SB 697 is not just its content but the way its support seems to be orchestrated. I've learned that Moms Demand Action, a prominent lobbying group, is influencing the testimony process by requiring its members to submit their statements to the organization for approval before they can be posted or shared publicly. If accurate, this practice is deeply troubling. It suggests that the voices we're hearing in favor of SB 697 may not be genuine, independent opinions from Oregonians but rather a scripted campaign pushed by an advocacy group with a vested interest. This undermines the credibility of the public input process and makes me question whether this bill truly reflects the will of the people or just the agenda of a well-funded lobby.

On the substance of SB 697 itself, I find it lacking. The restrictions it proposes—be they limits on rights, increased regulations, or new compliance hurdles—seem designed more to signal virtue than to solve problems. We already have laws in place to address safety concerns; what's missing is enforcement and practical solutions, not more red tape that punishes those who follow the rules. This bill feels like a solution in search of a problem, and I fear it will only alienate Oregonians who value their liberties.

I also worry about the precedent SB 697 could set. It's another step toward eroding individual rights under the pretext of collective good, a trend that rarely ends well for freedom-loving people. Instead of piling on restrictions, let's invest in community resources—mental health programs, education, and local outreach—that tackle the root causes of issues without treating every citizen like a suspect.

Please listen to those of us who oppose SB 697, not just the filtered voices of groups like Moms Demand Action. This bill doesn't serve Oregon's best interests, and I respectfully ask you to vote against it. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Harald Thomas  
Portland, Oregon