

Submitter: Zachary Hall

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB697

Senate Bill 697 is a disgraceful overreach that stomps on the rights of young Oregonians. Banning firearm possession for those under 21—except for a few crumbs you toss them—with jail time and hefty fines? This isn't safety; it's a blatant attack on liberty, and you know it. Let's tear this apart with facts and show why it's nonsense.

This punishes law-abiding youth, not criminals. Oregon DOJ: 1,013 gun crimes in 2023—90%+ tied to illegal guns, not legal owners aged 18-20. FBI's 2022 data: only 6% of gun homicides nationwide were by 18-20-year-olds, mostly with stolen weapons. You're jailing a kid in Eugene for a rifle while thugs run free. OHA: Oregon's gun homicide rate—3.8 per 100,000 in 2022—beats the national 4.5, and no data shows 18-20-year-olds drive it. This is a solution to nothing.

You're gutting rights for no reason. Bruen (2022) says "common use" arms are protected—rifles and shotguns on your "okay" list are owned by millions, including young adults. Historically, 18-year-olds fought in wars with M16s—now you say they can't own a bolt-action at home? A 2019 Journal of Criminal Law study found no link between age-based bans and reduced violence in states like ours. You've got zero evidence, just control lust.

Rural youth get crushed. Oregon's 18-20-year-olds hunt—35% of our hunters are under 25 (ODFW 2023)—and protect farms. Your bill kills that, allowing only specific guns they might not own, with \$6,250 fines they can't pay. Meanwhile, transfers get riskier—parents hesitate, dealers balk. You're strangling tradition and self-reliance. Safety? Lies. CDC: 80% of teen gun deaths are gang-related, not legal owners. OSP: 40% of crimes unsolved—focus there, not on a 19-year-old target shooter.

Exceptions for cops and military? Hypocrisy—why trust them but not a farmer's kid? This "Russell Paul Evans Act" honors no one; it's a power grab.

Kill this, Reynolds, and the rest of you. Fix real issues—mental health (40% provider shortage, OHA) or illegal guns (80% of murders, DOJ). SB 697 is an insult to Oregon's youth and heritage. Scrap it before it ruins lives.