

Submitter: Kipp Karavanich  
On Behalf Of:  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB697

I strongly oppose Oregon SB 697

Oregon Senate Bill 697 represents a blatant and unconstitutional infringement upon the fundamental right to keep and bear arms, enshrined in the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution. This legislation, which seeks to prohibit law-abiding individuals under the age of 21 from possessing firearms, not only disregards the core tenets of our constitutional republic but also actively harms responsible young adults and vital activities like scholastic shooting sports.

The Second Amendment is not a privilege granted by the state; it is an inherent right of the people, essential for self-defense and the preservation of liberty. SB 697 attempts to arbitrarily strip a significant segment of the adult population of this fundamental right based solely on age. This is a dangerous overreach that treats all individuals under 21 as inherently untrustworthy with firearms, ignoring the vast majority who are responsible, law-abiding citizens.

This legislation will have a devastating impact on high school and college shooting sports programs across Oregon. These programs provide valuable opportunities for young people to develop discipline, teamwork, and marksmanship skills in a safe and structured environment. SB 697 threatens the very existence of these programs by preventing participants under 21 from legally possessing the necessary firearms for practice and competition. This not only deprives these young athletes of crucial extracurricular activities but also undermines the pipeline for future generations of responsible firearm owners and potential participants in Olympic and other competitive shooting disciplines.

The hypocrisy of this bill is particularly stark when considering the rights and responsibilities afforded to 18-year-olds in other critical areas of our society. At 18, an individual can vote, enter into contracts, and, most significantly, serve in the United States military. Our nation entrusts 18-year-old men and women with the responsibility of defending our freedoms, including the very Second Amendment rights that SB 697 seeks to curtail. These young service members are trained in the use of firearms and are authorized to carry them in defense of our nation. Yet, under this misguided legislation, these same individuals could be prohibited from possessing a firearm for self-defense or participation in shooting sports while on leave or upon honorable discharge in their home state. This is a nonsensical and insulting contradiction that undermines the sacrifices made by these young patriots.

Furthermore, restricting the rights of an entire class of adults based on age is a

dangerous slope. Where does this arbitrary line-drawing end? If 21 is deemed too young, what prevents the state from raising the age further, incrementally eroding the Second Amendment rights of more and more citizens? The focus should not be on broad, discriminatory restrictions but on holding individuals accountable for their actions and enforcing existing laws against those who misuse firearms, regardless of age.

In conclusion, Oregon SB 697 is an unconstitutional assault on the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding young adults. It will cripple valuable scholastic shooting sports programs and create an absurd and disrespectful situation where those who can be trusted to defend our nation with firearms are denied the right to possess them for self-defense and recreation at home. This legislation must be rejected in defense of our fundamental rights and the responsible young citizens of Oregon.