

Submitter: Jennifer Gunter
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB697

I OPPOSE Senate Bill 697, which raises the minimum age for firearm possession from 18 to 21, with limited exceptions. While the intent to curb gun violence is understandable, this legislation is riddled with discrepancies that undermine its legitimacy and infringe upon fundamental rights.

First, consider the contradiction in treating 18- to 20-year-olds as adults in some contexts but not others. These young adults can enlist in the military, risking their lives to defend our freedoms—freedoms that include the right to bear arms under the Second Amendment! Yet, SB 697 strips them of this basic right upon returning home, deeming them unfit to possess firearms they've been trained to use in war. This paradox is not just illogical; it's UNJUST!

Legally, this bill treads on shaky ground. The U.S. Supreme Court in *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008) affirmed that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to possess firearms for self-defense. By categorically denying this right to law-abiding adults under 21, SB 697 violates federal constitutional protections. Oregon's Constitution, Article I, Section 27, similarly guarantees the right to bear arms for defense. The bill's broad restriction—punishable by up to 364 days in jail and a \$6,250 fine—flies in the face of these precedents without clear evidence that it enhances public safety beyond existing laws. Further, *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (2010) reinforces that Second Amendment rights apply to states via the Fourteenth Amendment, yet SB 697 disregards this by imposing age-based bans that disproportionately burden young adults. Adding to this, *Bruen v. New York State Rifle & Pistol Association* (2022) demands that firearm regulations align with historical traditions of regulation. SB 697 offers NO such historical basis—early American laws restricted minors in militias, not adults over 18 from possessing guns for self-defense. This failure under Bruen's strict test deepens the bill's constitutional frailty.

Exceptions in the bill, like allowing certain rifles for hunting, are arbitrary and fail to address self-defense needs. Case law, such as *McDonald v. City of Chicago* (2010), reinforces that Second Amendment rights apply to states via the Fourteenth Amendment, yet SB 697 disregards this by imposing age-based bans that disproportionately burden young adults. Meanwhile, federal law already restricts handgun sales to those under 21, making Oregon's additional limits redundant and overly punitive.

This bill doesn't just limit rights—it creates a legal quagmire. How can we ask young adults to defend our nation but deny them the tools to defend themselves? I urge the legislature to reject SB 697, respecting BOTH the sacrifices of our youth and the constitutional framework that protects us all.

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