

Submitter: Kyle Jones

On Behalf Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB698

I oppose Senate Bill 698, which lets public entities strip concealed handgun licensees (CHLs) of their affirmative defense for carrying in public buildings, reducing it to a Class A misdemeanor. This undermines Second Amendment rights and punishes law-abiding citizens unfairly.

CHL holders undergo rigorous vetting—background checks, training, and fees—proving they're responsible. ORS 166.370 already balances safety and rights with an affirmative defense. SB 698 lets local bodies override this statewide standard, creating a patchwork of rules. A CHL holder could face a year in jail and a \$6,250 fine for carrying in a city hall one county over, despite compliance elsewhere.

The bill lacks evidence that CHL carriers threaten public safety. FBI data (2022) shows concealed carriers are rarely involved in crimes—less than 1% of incidents. It's a solution without a problem, targeting the trustworthy instead of actual risks.

This also burdens rural CHL holders, who rely on concealed carry for protection in remote areas, only to face inconsistent bans in public spaces. Reject SB 698—preserve uniform rights and focus on real threats, not symbolic restrictions.