

Submitter: Matthew Goodrich

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans

Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB947

Strong Opposition to SB 947 – Preserve the Militia, Protect Our Rights

Dear Chair Evans, Vice-Chair Lewis, and Members of the Committee on Emergency Management, General Government, and Veterans,

I am writing to strongly oppose SB 947, which proposes to eliminate statutory references to the "militia" and replace them solely with "National Guard." I urge you to vote against this dangerous redefinition.

The Founders of this nation—and the Oregon Constitution itself—recognized that the militia was not a government-controlled force, but the body of the people, ready to defend their communities, liberties, and the state itself when necessary. The militia historically included everyday citizens, not just professional soldiers or government-organized forces.

By erasing the term "militia" from Oregon law, SB 947 severs a vital link between the people and their constitutional role in safeguarding freedom. This bill represents more than a mere linguistic change; it reflects a deeper philosophical shift toward greater centralization of military power and a weakening of citizen sovereignty.

The National Guard, while important, is a federally controlled force. It can be—and often is—mobilized at the direction of Washington, D.C., not just the Governor of Oregon. Replacing the people's independent militia with the National Guard in statutory language narrows the public's recognized right and duty to defend the state and themselves. It hands more control to bureaucracies and political appointees, distancing the defense of liberty from the people it is meant to serve.

This is a dangerous precedent.

It undermines the citizen-based defense tradition fundamental to a free republic.

It opens the door to further restricting lawful civilian ownership and use of firearms.

It erodes the constitutional principle that military force must remain subordinate to civil authority—where "civil authority" includes we the people, not just elected officials.

If history teaches us anything, it is that centralized control over armed forces without the balance of a citizen militia leads to diminished freedoms. Oregonians have a proud tradition of self-reliance, responsibility, and readiness to defend their rights. SB 947 betrays that legacy.

I respectfully but firmly urge you to reject SB 947.  
Preserve the militia. Protect the people's rights. Uphold the Constitution.

Thank you for your service to our state and for considering the will of your constituents who value liberty, tradition, and constitutional integrity.

Sincerely,  
Matthew Goodrich  
Medford, Oregon