

Opposition to Oregon Senate Bill 243

Oregon Senate Bill 243 (SB 243) is an overreaching and fiscally irresponsible piece of legislation that violates constitutional rights, fails to address the root causes of violence, imposes impractical restrictions, and burdens Oregonians with costly measures that do little to enhance public safety. This omnibus gun control bill, which includes a 72-hour waiting period for firearm purchases, a ban on rapid-fire devices like bump stocks, expanded gun-free zones, and age-based restrictions on firearm possession, must be rejected for its disregard of fiscal prudence and individual freedoms.

Violation of Constitutional Rights

SB 243 undermines the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, which guarantees the right to keep and bear arms. The 72-hour waiting period imposes an arbitrary delay on law-abiding citizens exercising this fundamental right, creating barriers for those seeking self-defense tools. Similarly, bans on rapid-fire devices and restrictions on semi-automatic weapons for those under 21 limit access without evidence that these measures reduce crime. Expanding gun-free zones, allowing local governments to prohibit concealed carry in public buildings, erodes the ability of licensed individuals to protect themselves, particularly in rural areas with limited security resources. These provisions treat law-abiding gun owners as suspects, disregarding their rights while imposing costly enforcement mechanisms on taxpayers.

Failure to Address Root Causes of Violence

Proponents claim SB 243 will curb gun violence, but it sidesteps the root causes—mental health crises and criminal behavior—while wasting public funds on ineffective measures. Oregon's gun death rate is largely driven by suicides, yet the bill's waiting period does nothing to address the state's chronic underfunding of mental health services. Investing in mental health infrastructure would be a fiscally responsible approach to saving lives, unlike the bill's blanket restrictions. Banning devices like bump stocks, rarely used in crimes, diverts resources from targeting illegal firearm use. Republicans in the Oregon Senate have criticized this misallocation of funds, advocating for solutions that address actual drivers of violence rather than symbolic gestures that burden taxpayers and law-abiding citizens.

Impractical and Fiscally Irresponsible Implementation

SB 243's provisions are not only impractical but also impose significant financial costs on Oregonians. The 72-hour waiting period creates logistical hurdles for gun dealers, particularly at gun shows, threatening small businesses and rural economies. Compliance with this rule requires additional administrative oversight, increasing costs for retailers and, ultimately, consumers. The expansion of gun-free zones places an unfunded mandate on local governments, especially in rural counties with strained budgets, as Senator Todd Nash has noted. These areas lack the resources to enforce such bans, rendering them ineffective against criminals while costing taxpayers for signage and enforcement efforts. The age restriction on

semi-automatic weapons unfairly penalizes young adults aged 18–20, who bear other adult responsibilities, and adds regulatory costs without clear public safety benefits. These measures create a complex, costly regulatory framework that strains public resources and erodes trust in governance.

Lack of Transparency and Fiscal Accountability

The legislative process for SB 243 has been marked by a lack of transparency and fiscal accountability, further fueling opposition. Last-minute amendments, including attempts to revive elements of Measure 114's magazine ban, were introduced without sufficient public scrutiny, bypassing opportunities for cost-benefit analysis. This rushed approach risks wasting taxpayer dollars on poorly vetted policies. The bill's passage on a party-line vote, despite significant public opposition, reflects a disregard for bipartisan consensus and responsible stewardship of public resources. Oregonians deserve a transparent process that evaluates the fiscal impact of legislation and respects their input.

Conclusion

Senate Bill 243 is a flawed, fiscally irresponsible attempt at gun control that infringes on constitutional rights, misallocates public funds, and fails to address the true causes of violence. Its costly and impractical provisions burden small businesses, rural communities, and taxpayers while offering no meaningful improvements to public safety. Oregonians deserve policies that prioritize fiscal responsibility, respect constitutional protections, and invest in effective solutions like mental health support. SB 243 fails on all counts and must be opposed in its current form.

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