

Submitter: Jacob Richard
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Rules
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB243
To the Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

Subject: Opposition to SB 243

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 243B, which proposes significant changes to Oregon's firearm laws, including a 72-hour waiting period for gun purchases, a ban on rapid-fire devices such as bump stocks, restrictions on firearm possession for individuals under 21, and provisions allowing local governments to prohibit concealed carry in public buildings. While I understand the intent to enhance public safety, I believe this bill infringes upon the constitutional rights of law-abiding Oregonians and fails to address the root causes of violence effectively.

First, the 72-hour waiting period for firearm purchases imposes an undue burden on responsible gun owners. This provision assumes that delaying access to firearms will reduce impulsive acts of violence, yet there is limited evidence to suggest that such waiting periods significantly decrease gun-related incidents. For individuals in immediate need of self-defense, such as those facing domestic violence or credible threats, this delay could compromise their safety. Moreover, Oregon's existing background check system already ensures that prohibited individuals are screened, making the additional waiting period redundant and overly restrictive.

Second, the ban on rapid-fire devices, such as bump stocks, targets accessories rather than addressing the underlying issues of criminal behavior and mental health. While bump stocks were used in a tragic incident, they are rarely involved in firearm-related crimes. Focusing on accessories distracts from more pressing needs, such as improving access to mental health services, which Senate Republican Leader Daniel Bonham has noted as a critical factor in preventing suicides—the leading cause of firearm deaths in Oregon.

Third, restricting individuals under 21 from purchasing semi-automatic firearms disproportionately affects young adults who are legally recognized as adults in other contexts, such as voting and military service. This provision undermines their Second Amendment rights and fails to account for exemptions for responsible young adults, such as those in law enforcement or with hunting needs. The bill's exceptions for certain rifles and shotguns are insufficient to address the diverse needs of Oregon's rural communities, where firearms are often tools for livelihood and protection.

Finally, allowing local governments to prohibit concealed carry in public buildings, even for concealed handgun license holders, creates a patchwork of inconsistent regulations across the state. This undermines the uniformity of Oregon's concealed carry laws and could confuse law-abiding citizens, potentially leading to unintentional violations. It also weakens the ability of licensed individuals to exercise their right to self-defense in public spaces, particularly in areas where security is limited.

I share the goal of reducing gun violence, but Senate Bill 243B takes a misguided approach that punishes law-abiding citizens while failing to address the root causes of violence, such as mental health crises and criminal activity. I urge you to consider alternative measures, such as increased funding for mental health programs, enhanced law enforcement training, and community-based violence prevention initiatives, which would better serve Oregonians without infringing on their constitutional protections.

As noted by the Oregon Senate Republicans and gun owners in public testimony, this bill risks eroding Second Amendment rights and has been criticized for its lack of transparency in the legislative process. I respectfully request that you vote against Senate Bill 243B and prioritize solutions that balance public safety with the preservation of individual liberties.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for considering the concerns of Oregonians who value their constitutional rights.