

Submitter:

Christy Abbe

On Behalf Of:

Committee:

House Committee On Rules

Measure, Appointment or Topic:

SB243

### Opposition Statement on Oregon Senate Bill 243

We strongly oppose Senate Bill 243 (SB 243), a comprehensive firearm regulation package that imposes significant restrictions on Oregonians' Second Amendment rights. While the bill aims to enhance public safety, it raises serious concerns for women's safety and self-defense, disproportionately burdens rural communities, and places an unsustainable fiscal strain on state and local governments. Below, we outline key objections, with a particular focus on the impact on women and the economic implications.

#### Women's Concerns: Undermining Safety and Self-Defense

SB 243's provisions, including a mandatory 72-hour waiting period for firearm purchases, restrictions on concealed carry in public buildings, and a ban on rapid-fire devices, create barriers that disproportionately affect women seeking to protect themselves. These measures undermine women's autonomy and safety in the following ways:

**Delayed Access to Protection:** The 72-hour waiting period delays women's ability to acquire firearms for self-defense, which is critical in situations involving domestic violence or immediate threats. Studies indicate that women are more likely to purchase firearms for personal protection, and delays could leave vulnerable individuals defenseless during critical moments. A woman escaping an abusive situation may not have the luxury of waiting three days to secure a means of self-defense.

**Restricted Concealed Carry in Public Spaces:** By allowing local governments to prohibit concealed carry in public buildings, SB 243 creates gun-free zones that may deter women from carrying firearms for protection in places like libraries, courthouses, or community centers. Women, who often face higher risks of assault in public spaces, rely on concealed carry to maintain personal security. These restrictions could leave them vulnerable in areas where law enforcement response times may be delayed, particularly in rural Oregon.

**Disproportionate Impact on Rural Women:** Rural Oregonians, including women, often live in areas with limited law enforcement presence. Firearms are essential tools for self-defense against human and wildlife threats. SB 243's restrictions, such as the ban on rapid-fire devices, could limit the effectiveness of firearms used for protection, placing rural women at greater risk.

These provisions fail to address the unique safety needs of women, particularly those

in vulnerable situations, and instead impose blanket restrictions that erode their ability to exercise their constitutional rights effectively.

#### Fiscal Impact: Unsustainable Costs for State and Local Governments

SB 243's fiscal implications are alarming, placing a significant burden on Oregon's state budget and local governments already struggling to fund essential services. Key concerns include:

**High State Costs:** The bill is estimated to cost at least \$14.7 million for the 2025–27 biennium to implement measures such as fingerprint-based background checks and statewide tracking systems tied to the permit-to-purchase framework. These costs are likely to escalate over time, diverting funds from critical areas like mental health services, housing, and public safety programs that address the root causes of violence.

**Unfunded Mandates on Local Governments:** SB 243 imposes “indeterminate” but potentially substantial costs on counties, which would be responsible for administering the expanded permit-to-purchase system and enforcing new regulations. Local governments, particularly in rural areas, lack the resources to absorb these costs without cutting essential services like emergency response or community programs. This could exacerbate inequities between urban and rural communities.

**Lack of Cost-Benefit Analysis:** The bill's fiscal impact has not been adequately studied, and its proponents have attempted to bypass thorough review by the Ways and Means Committee or the Department of Corrections. This lack of transparency is concerning. VOTE NO!