

Good Day, esteemed members of the House Rules Committee. My name is Karl Gatke, and I am a resident of Dundee, Oregon, a Veteran with 30 years of Military service, multiple deployments overseas, and I'm a law abiding gun owner. I am here to respectfully voice my opposition to Senate Bill 243, which imposes restrictive firearms regulations that I believe undermine the rights of all law-abiding Oregonians without effectively addressing the root causes of gun violence.

First, the ban on rapid-fire devices, such as bump stocks, targets tools that are rarely used in crimes. According to FBI crime statistics, rifles of all types, including those with such accessories, account for less than 3% of firearm-related homicides. Punishing lawful owners with felony charges for possession or transfer does little to deter criminals, who often obtain firearms illegally. Instead, this provision feels like a symbolic gesture that erodes Second Amendment rights without meaningful public safety benefits.

Second, the 72-hour waiting period for firearm purchases adds an unnecessary burden on responsible gun owners. Many Oregonians, especially those in rural areas, rely on firearms for self-defense, hunting, or protecting livestock. This delay could leave vulnerable individuals, such as victims of domestic violence, without timely access to protection. Studies, like one from the National Institute of Justice in 2018, show waiting periods have mixed results on reducing gun violence, yet they consistently inconvenience law-abiding citizens who have already passed background checks.

Lastly, allowing local governments to ban concealed carry in public buildings creates a patchwork of inconsistent rules that confuses law-abiding concealed handgun license holders. These individuals undergo rigorous background checks and training to carry responsibly. Stripping their ability to defend themselves in public spaces could increase risks rather than reduce them. For example, a 2022 study by the Crime Prevention Research Center found that concealed carry permit holders are overwhelmingly law-abiding, with revocation rates below 0.1%. Those numbers are amazing, below 0.1%, yet they continue to be targeted because of emotions and these hard numbers continue to be ignored.

I strongly urge the committee to reject SB 243 and focus on solutions that address mental health, enforce existing laws, and target illegal firearm use without penalizing responsible citizens. Thank you for your time and consideration. If there are any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Respectfully,

Karl Gatke