

SB 554 – GUNS IN PUBLIC BUILDINGS

Chief Sponsors: Senator Ginny Burdick, Senator James Manning Jr., Senator Rob Wagner, Representative Rachel Prusak, Representative Lisa Reynolds

GOAL

SB 554 allows local entities to have more control over the safety of their public buildings.

When we say public building, this includes:

1. Our schools where children and teachers should feel safe
2. Our county buildings where citizens go to cast a ballot or seek out vital community resources
3. The State Capitol or a City Hall where Oregonians enter with the intent to meet lawmakers and participate in democracy

WHAT SB 554 DOES

SB 554 allows school districts and local government entities to decide whether to allow people with concealed handgun licenses (CHLs) to bring loaded guns into public buildings.

BACKGROUND

Current Oregon law prohibits guns in public buildings but provides an exemption for CHL holders.¹ In 1995, the state passed a law that preempted local jurisdictions from enacting firearm laws that are stronger than the state. Sheriffs are required to issue a CHL to any person that pays the \$65 fee, passes a background check, is 21 years of age and completes a safety course.

*As of February 2nd, 2021, Oregon has issued more than **310,410** concealed handgun licenses. That is an **11.5%** increase since 2020.*

Given recent state and national events as well as the recommendation by the Department of Homeland Security to prioritize security measures at government facilities², SB 554 is especially important because it allows school districts, local governments and other public entities to have more control over the safety of their buildings. That means the decision whether to allow CHL holders in public buildings would be determined by those who know their community best, not politicians in Salem.

KEY POLICY ELEMENTS

Provides local entities the authority to adopt ordinances limiting possession of firearms in public buildings.

- This includes the authority to limit or preclude the affirmative defense provided in ORS 166.370(g) for concealed handgun licensees.
- The **-1 amendment** removes the CHL exemption in state buildings, putting them on the same level as courthouses and federal buildings

Raises the initial concealed handgun license fee from \$65 to \$100 and the renewal fee from \$50 to \$75.

- Oregon has not raised the CHL fee since the 1990's. It currently has the 24th lowest initial fee and the 30th lowest renewal fee.

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¹ ORS 166.370 (3) provides the exemptions to intentionally possessing a firearm in a public building

² <https://www.dhs.gov/ntas/advisory/national-terrorism-advisory-system-bulletin-january-27-2021>