

JEFF GOLDEN
STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 3



OREGON STATE SENATE

March 25, 2021

Secretary Brocker,

Please accept this explanation of my Aye vote on SB 554.

I strongly disagree with assertions by SB 554's opponents that this legislation “clearly” violates the Second Amendment, a constitutional provision that I, along with most of my constituents, value and support. Leading experts on constitutional law have debated the precise meaning and application of the of the Second Amendment since it was written. I find the comment of the late Justice Antonin Scalia, included in his explanation of a Supreme Court decision, to be central to the ongoing argument: the Second Amendment does not grant the “right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever for whatever purpose.”

I also take exception with the criticism that this bill nullifies the right of concealed weapon permit holders to bear arms as they choose. The core of this legislation is to allow local elected officials to decide whether or not firearms should be allowed in the public buildings for which they are responsible—a *power they had for decades before state law changed in the 1990s*. The citizens of my district, like Oregonians generally, are deeply divided on these issues. Some oppose any limitation or regulation of any kind on firearms. Some would like to see them banned on publicly-owned property altogether. Because community beliefs and values differ so much across our state, I believe that local elected officials are best positioned to make this complex, difficult decision; I can't think of anyone more qualified to make decisions about firearms in a particular school than its locally-elected school board members. That is why I supported this measure.

Senator Jeff Golden, Oregon Senate District 3