
Opening

It's way too easy for a criminal to steal your jewelry or silver and go sell it – quickly, maybe even within an hour or two – for cash. No questions asked, no records. They steer clear of pawn shops, of course, which are heavily regulated, keep a record of the items, and ask for their I.D. and record that too. No, they just go somewhere else where they won't be asked. Several communities in Oregon have adopted regulations, they know which ones, and just drive a few extra miles and go somewhere else. And then there are the traveling trade shows that come thru town; maybe you've seen the big newspaper ads announcing to everyone – everyone – to come on down to the hotel, or the fairgrounds, to sell your jewelry and silver.

Individuals aren't the only victims; businesses that inadvertently purchase stolen materials are victims as well. ⁱ

Talking with law enforcement and business owners, what we all recognize is that there are holes in our regulations, and we need to plug them.

Several Oregon communities are already trying to rein in the problem with local ordinances: four countiesⁱⁱ --; and seven citiesⁱⁱⁱ. But that leaves the rest of the state uncovered. Sixteen states already have established state-wide statute requiring record-keeping, working with law enforcement, and similar requirements: Alabama, Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

This bill simply establishes a state-wide baseline for keeping records of the second-hand jewelry and precious metal sales, while keeping local control intact.

It's the product of discussions with law enforcement and business coming to some conclusions about what would be **reasonable** and that would help both law enforcement and victims.

Objectives

The objectives of the bill are to reduce property crime associated with the theft of gold & precious metals jewelry, and provide a way for law enforcement officers and victims to identify and recover stolen goods.

What this bill does:

The bill does that by :

1. Requiring a baseline standard for recording transactions, to identify the seller, and the item (maintain records for one year), establishes a holding period (7 calendar days) and allows for law enforcement to see the item or transaction record
 2. Listing exemptions such as gold ore and dental gold.
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The value of gold and silver has increased dramatically, stores for second-hand purchase continue to crop up, the frequency of “trade shows” is increasing, and there’s a lot of property theft of gold and silver items.

Local ordinances have been adopted in some communities, they are proven successful, and businesses have adapted to those ordinances. Not regulating *all* the “brick and mortar” establishments and transient sales that handle these items is unfair to those that are regulated, and encourages flight of stolen property to unregulated communities without specific ordinances.

I’m asking for your AYE vote.

Closing

Eugene police detective Chris Vreim tell us: "If there's just one thing you do this session, make sure you pass that bill. Right now we have people stealing jewelry in Lane County and going right down to Roseburg in Douglas County because they have different laws and we can't track it."

And from Oregon State Sheriffs' Association President Larry Blanton, and Deschutes County Sheriff, tell us: "We support House Bill 4108 because it gives law enforcement a new tool for our toolbox for fighting property crimes, especially those related to Oregon's meth epidemic."

Let Oregon join those other states in clamping down on this flood of stolen jewelry and silver.

Other questions that may come up:

- Why not prohibit same day cash? Two important reasons: a) Some sellers need the cash right away to meet critical needs such as payment of rent, purchase of food or transportation. And b), law enforcement tells us that obtaining identification of seller and recording the transaction are more important than prohibiting immediate cash payment, and there's an advantage enforcement and prosecution if money or something of value has changed hands when the seller brought it in.
- What about the buying on the internet? Regulating certain kinds of transactions is unfeasible at this time. **We're not trying to reach too far with this bill** - for example, we are *not* trying to regulate Internet sales such as Craig's list, EBay; Mail-in companies; or house parties.
- What about the mail-in envelopes? It's a far reach to craft an appropriate state statute, since it involves interstate commerce. Also, our law enforcement contacts don't think that's where much of the stolen items are going, since it requires a long wait before the sender gets the cash. Definitely not desirable for grab-and-run crimes to satisfy drug addiction.

ⁱⁱ [The stolen property can be seized by law enforcement, and they've already paid for it. Legitimate businesses have an interest in protecting their investment and reputation, and incidents of purchasing stolen property can diminish the industry's reputation.]

ⁱⁱ Deschutes, Lane, Polk, and Yamhill

ⁱⁱⁱ Ashland, Beaverton, Central Point, Eugene, Portland, Salem, and Stayton