



## **OREGON SENATE DEMOCRATS**

Salem, Oregon  
Oregon State Legislature

### **PRESS ADVISORY**

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CONTACT: Amanda Kraus, 503-986-1074

[Amanda.Kraus@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:Amanda.Kraus@oregonlegislature.gov)

### **Senate Democrats Approve Bill to Protect Students, Public Workers and Communities from Gun Violence**

*Senate Bill 554 Grants Localities Choice to Determine if Firearms Should be Allowed in their Buildings*

SALEM – Today, Oregon Senate Democrats voted to protect our students, workers and the general public from gun violence. Senate Bill 554 allows local jurisdictions to prohibit guns in public buildings, including schools. The bill passed the Oregon Senate on a 16-7 vote.

“I, like so many Oregonians, have been distressed by the tragedy of gun violence and the rise of extremism. Communities throughout Oregon deserve the ability to decide whether to allow firearms into public buildings, such as schools and office buildings,” said Senator Ginny Burdick (D-Portland), a longtime champion for gun safety. “Senate Bill 554 will create safer environments for learning and working while allowing flexibility for schools and local governments,” she added.

Currently, concealed handgun license (CHL) holders have an affirmative defense for the crime of possessing a firearm in airports and public buildings – including schools. When Senate Bill 554 becomes law, it will allow local governments and school districts to choose to remove that affirmative defense and ban firearms on their premises.

For entities that choose to disallow firearms in their buildings, Senate Bill 554 will require a notice be posted at all entrances with a universally recognizable symbol to ensure clarity for those who seek to enter the building.

Senator James I. Manning Jr. (D-Eugene) also Chief Sponsored Senate Bill 554. “I am a gun owner. I’m a military veteran and a former law enforcement officer. That means I have seen – many times – that when a gun is present the situation is more dangerous and the loss of life is more likely,” said Senator Manning. “Senate Bill 554 does not impact one’s ability to get a CHL, but if a public entity decides, they can eliminate firearms on their premise no matter your CHL status, which I

believe removes intimidation and leads to a healthier workplace,” added Senator Manning. “The bill makes sense. It gives choice. It will make our schools safer, public workers safer and the community members who need to go to these buildings safer,” said Senator Manning.

“I am proud we passed Senate Bill 554 today. It will make our schools and public buildings safer for our students and all Oregonians.” said Senator Burdick.

Senate Bill 554 now moves to the House of Representatives for consideration.

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