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As Violent Crime Surges, Democrats Push Bill to Curtail Right of Self-Defense

SALEM, Ore. – Senate Bill 554 was heard today in the Senate Committee on Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110 Implementation. The bill would pave the way for a patchwork of local concealed handgun license (CHL) regulations to restrict where Oregonians can protect themselves and others.

“Concealed carry license holders are some of the most upstanding people in our state,” said Senator Kim Thatcher (R-Keizer), who is the Vice-Chair of the Committee. “These people are the ones you would want to be your neighbors and friends because they protect their families and others around them. The last thing we should be doing is discouraging people from helping keep our communities safe by creating an inconsistent standard of laws across the state.”

According to [research](#), less than one-hundredth of one percent (.0074%) of Oregon concealed handgun license holders commit felonies. The majority of which were unlikely to have involved a firearm. The [FBI](#) has indicated that nearly 3.2% of active shooter situations are stopped with someone with a CHL. Other [researchers](#) have put that number as high as 16.5%.

SB 554 allows local governments and municipalities to regulate when and where concealed handgun licensees would be able to protect themselves and others. Thus, someone carrying legally and safely with a concealed handgun permit could end up committing several crimes in the course of running errands on a Tuesday afternoon, instantly turning them into criminals.

“Thanks to our rigorous concealed carry licensing program in Oregon, CHL holders are the good guys with guns,” added Senate Republican Leader Fred Girod (R-Lyons). “This bill is a “solution” in search of a problem. The sponsors have failed to bring forth any evidence that this bill would make anyone safer. It would do the opposite. With [violent crime on the rise](#), we can’t afford to severely curtail Oregonians’ right to self-defense.”

The bill also raises fees on CHL applications and renewals.

“Increasing gun violence has had a disproportionate impact on low-income and minority communities,” Sen. Girod continued. “The only thing increased fees will do is put the right of

self-defense out of reach for these people. Wealthy and middle-class families won't be deterred from protecting themselves and their families.

“Every life lost to gun violence is a tragedy. If we want to solve the issue of gun violence, CHL holders are the wrong place to look. Let's follow the data.”

Today's public hearing set a session-record for the number of people who submitted [testimony](#) against a bill.

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