

Respected members of the committee:

I am here today to express my opposition to SB 941. This bill has been foisted on the Oregon public under a pretense of public safety, which I would like to examine in my testimony. It would appear to me that the supporters of this bill feel that 11,208 deaths is sufficient to declare a legitimate threat to public safety. I'm not going to dispute that; I would however like to analyze that figure and the legislature's proposed response in context.

In 2012, an estimated 13,712 people in the US possessing an AIDS diagnosis succumbed to their affliction. In much the same way a person came to die from a disease that had been given to them, so too had 11,208 souls perished as a direct result of the actions of another from the barrel of a gun. It would not be unfair to say intent is irrelevant, suffice it to say that both groups contain examples of intentional and unintentional behavior.

If we were to propose a measured legislative response to this threat to public safety, and base it on SB 941, it would probably not look much different than mandatory disclosure to the government of any consensual and nonconsensual sexual activity involving one or more AIDS or HIV+ individuals. What's more, each occurrence would need to be disclosed for the sole purpose of protecting some as-of-yet unnamed party. This legislation could also be written so as to create a database of diagnosed HIV+ and AIDS infected individuals, and then require ALL individuals to submit to disclosure and governmental consent involving any sexual transaction.

The good news is that this would solve prostitution, however I can already hear the cries of those who would fairly, and rightly claim that such an act incontrovertibly discriminates against gay males, whom are disproportionately represented among the AIDS and HIV community. As a champion of LGBT rights in the state of Oregon I have no doubt I would find disagreement from you Senator. Gelser.

I would ask the committee then, how is this different? HOW IS THIS DIFFERENT? If 11,000 deaths is considered the threshold for a compelling government interest and a registration and permitting bill for sexual activity is considered discriminatory for homosexual couples, how could it not be considered so for Law Abiding gun owners? I respectfully submit that it is not. And the rights of both groups must necessarily be preserved as a result.

Thank you for your time and consideration.