

Testimony to the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee
On SB 941
April 1, 2015

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee.

My name is Tom O'Connor. I'm retired and live in Clackamas County.

I'm here as a lifelong gun owner to support SB 941 to close the private sale and internet sales loophole in Oregon's existing background check system.

I grew up here in Oregon and learned to hunt and fish with my father and grandfather and took gun safety lessons and marksmanship through the Boy Scouts. I want to maintain the ability of responsible sportsmen to continue to hunt and fish in Oregon.

Like the clear majority of responsible gun owners, I support background checks for private sales as an important tool to help keep firearms out of the hands of felons, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill.

SB 941 is a common sense, balanced approach to help increase public safety, with protections for gun owners and with increased coordination among law enforcement.

1. From a purchaser's perspective, background checks are in no way an undue burden on gun owners. They are in no way a violation of the 2nd Amendment. Last year, I purchased a .22 rifle at a local store and went through the background check. It was a simple form to fill out and a quick call from the store to the State Police. It was not intrusive or burdensome and only took a few minutes.

2. From a seller's point of view, I believe requiring background checks for private sales through licensed gun dealers can actually be a benefit and a protection for gun owners. For example, I know at some point in the future all of us will be at the age where we will probably want to sell or gift our firearms. If the potential buyer is a stranger, not a family member, SB 941 means that they will know they have to go through a background check and I will know I am not selling to a person who could be a felon, domestic abuser or dangerously mentally ill. From a selfish point of view, as the seller I will be a lot safer going through the process with a licensed gun dealer rather than meeting someone I don't know in my living room or a restaurant parking lot.

With rights come responsibilities. This is one simple way for gun owners to do our part to help reduce gun violence and help preserve those rights.

We'll never stop every violent act but we must adopt – really return to – sensible common practice and regulations about the use of firearms in order to reduce the current level of violence and risk, particularly to our children.

Thank you.

Tom O'Connor