

In regards to SB 941:

Below is the statement I wrote to present at the hearing at 8am on April 1st. I arrived at the capitol building at 7am and at approximately 7:10 I signed up to make a statement. I would like to know what the procedure is for selecting the speakers as I was not called to speak. I know for a fact that people who signed up after me were selected to speak. Please respond so that I may understand how the system is supposed to work.

My name is Jacob Nelson. I'm a 22 year Naval officer and fighter pilot sworn to support the Constitution of the United States. I live in happy valley Oregon. I am in opposition to SB 941.

I would like to discuss the big picture on this subject. As important as the right to bear arms is, this is about even more, it's about maintaining the constitution as a whole. The constitution is the foundation of our system of laws and lays the framework for our form of government. Every attack on the integrity of our constitution is an attack on our country, our state and our liberty.

You cannot regulate an individual's rights. If we regulate free speech we call that censorship. When we regulate firearms we call that gun control. Censorship is something we all say should not be allowed, yet it occurs. One example is the effort people make to control content on the Internet. That control should be left to the individual viewing the internet. There are many examples where different constitutional rights are infringed but that should not be allowed.

The Bill of Rights was written to protect individual rights, including the right to bear arms (for defense and security). Today that is up for debate. Gun control is an erosion of our rights; and of our freedom; and of our security.

The erosion of our right to bear arms began in 1934 with the National Firearms Act. I'm sure they said those were common sense measures. Since then, we have continued to allow incremental limitations on those rights. If we don't stop the erosion of the right to bear arms, eventually those rights will be completely lost, along with the ability to defend ourselves.

This is occurring with many of our rights, it is not limited to gun rights. Gun rights are just the most tangible. Use this as an example of what is happening to all our constitutional rights. Realize we need to stop any type of attack on our constitution and our way of life. The freedom we have in this country is special and unique, do not take it for granted, please fight to protect it.

Do not pass any laws that effectively create gun registration in our state.

I am grateful for the right to speak to you today and thank you for your attention.

Respectfully,

Jacob Nelson
Happy Valley, OR

Below are some notes I made during the hearing.

One speaker in support of SB 941 was also a military officer who stated that the military undergoes background checks all the time and that they are not a problem. The statement he made was true but that was not a valid comparison. Military background checks happen every few years, not each time you transfer an item. Also, they don't register your property. If you must have background checks why must they happen on every transfer?

I like the idea of having a list of people who, due to criminal convictions, are prohibited from possessing a firearm. It would be like the no fly list. How about a system where the person purchasing a firearm is checked against the "no firearm list". If you are not on the list then the transfer is legal and no record of the transfer is required. This would enable private transfers to occur with confidence that the person you are transferring the firearm to is legal to possess said firearm.

Why should CHL holders be required to undergo a background check? If I am legal to carry a concealed weapon then it can be assumed that I am legal to purchase a firearm. If you can't make the "no firearm list" work then make an ID card that is issued to individuals after they pass a background check. In that case if you do not desire to hold a CHL you can undergo a periodic background check in order to get the ID card that proves you are legal to make private transfers.

"Instant" background checks do not stop criminals from getting firearms. Even if a criminal is foolish enough to submit himself to a background check which fails, he is rarely arrested or convicted for attempting to acquire a firearm. He is free to find an illegal means of getting a firearm and he will.

Of all the stories we heard today about someone being killed by a person with a firearm, not one person stated that the firearm used was acquired through legal means (like a private transfer). I have to believe that most criminals get their firearms through illegal means. If there is any evidence that one of those people murdered would have been saved by a universal background check it was not presented today.

Background checks will not reduce the rate of suicide. Even if we had no firearms in this country I believe our suicide rate would be the same. If a person wants to kill himself he will find a way. The idea that gun control will reduce suicides is a ridiculous argument.

Accidental shootings do occur. So do accidental deaths by many other means. If we are going to regulate firearms to control accidental deaths then we need to regulate many other things like swimming and crossing the street. I think a much better plan is to teach kids how to shoot and safely handle firearms, just like we teach them to swim and cross the street. That being said, people still die swimming and crossing the street.

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Jake Nelson