

Mr. Rhoads and members of the Oregon Senate and House of Representatives,

I am forwarding you the message sent to me by my county sheriff, Pat Garrett. \*Finally\* a reasonable voice from the people's leadership regarding gun ownership in Oregon.

As you know, Oregon has a long standing and rich history of responsible firearm enthusiasts and gun owners. The purpose of this letter is to urge you to strongly oppose senate bill 941 for the reasons Mr. Garrett notes here, and many more.

Background checks do not prevent people intent on committing violent crime from committing those crimes. If a person is intent on doing harm to another person, whether it be with a gun or a billy club, a background check will not stop that person from doing so. Indeed, background check laws such as what is proposed in SB 941 have no clear history at all of preventing crime, only adding onerous layers of 'law' that serve to impede a legal citizen's right to keep and bear arms as directed by the Constitution of the United States.

As we have seen Washington state, background check laws like this are nearly impossible to enforce. You place undue burden on police and citizens alike and create an atmosphere of complete uncertainty surrounding how a private citizen would go about perfectly legal activities such as loaning a pistol to a friend for a day at the shooting range, or trading one firearm for another with a family member.

SB 941 will not make Oregon a safer place. Criminals will not heed your background checks, that is WHY they are criminals...Indeed, this law will only make it harder for ordinary law abiding people such as myself to protect ourselves and our loved ones from those criminals. That fact \*alone\* should give you pause in supporting such legislation.

I strongly urge a vote of \*NO\* SB 941. This law is NOT in the people of Oregon's best interests. Any Senator or Representative who chooses to support this bill will force me to vigorously oppose them when it comes time for their reelection. I will donate to their opponents, campaign against them, and encourage all of my friends, family, and coworkers to do the same.

Regards,

Kevin S. Thurman  
Registered Independent Voter



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## Senate Bill 941 - Hearing is Wednesday, April 1 Background Checks on Private Gun Sales

*Your Sheriff's Office administers concealed handgun licenses for more than 20,000 people in Washington County, so we are receiving many inquiries about SB 941. My message below is an effort to answer all the questions being fielded by my office before the legislative hearing tomorrow.*

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Dear Washington County Residents and Businesses,

SB 941 is not a new concept, but the latest effort to legislate background checks on private gun sales. In fact, over several past legislative sessions, Oregon sheriffs have expressed strong concerns that have had a positive impact on the language in this version of the bill.



I commend the legislature for responding to several of our concerns. For instance, this version of the bill will not require background checks for firearms transfers among family, on shooting ranges, when hunting, for a gunsmith, for temporary reasons related to individual safety (though very limited), and when the transferee is in the presence of the transferor.

However, I still have concerns about some provisions of [SB 941](#).

1. I am concerned criminals will get around the new law by accessing firearms another way. For more than a few criminals, the threat of a misdemeanor criminal charge will not be a significant deterrent.
2. The law will be onerous for law abiding citizens with layers of new requirements. Many Oregonians are serious sport shooters, hunters and collectors. Frequently and with great care, they buy, sell and trade firearms with each other. I am concerned this law could create crimes and criminals out of otherwise law abiding people. Also, it's unclear what priority prosecutors and stressed court systems will place on charging people who have no

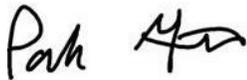
- prior criminal record for an unauthorized gun transfer under this new law.
3. I am concerned that much of this law will be unenforceable. It's unclear how law enforcement will learn of unauthorized transfers, and in many cases it will be very challenging to disprove a claim that a transfer was temporary in nature and therefore authorized. Laws that are largely unenforceable diminish respect for the law in general, which we do not need in today's environment.
  4. I am concerned how the State plans to account for the fiscal impact and increased pressure on the current background check system. The State's background system is already heavily burdened, and additional requests could significantly slow the system further, unless additional funds are provided to bolster capacity.

The Oregon State Sheriff's Association will offer written testimony at the hearing tomorrow, Wednesday, April 1. (Visit [www.oregonsheriffs.org](http://www.oregonsheriffs.org) tomorrow to read it.) **Clearly, if you have strong feelings, you are encouraged to [contact your legislators](#) directly.**

In the bigger picture this session, I appreciate the legislature's work to provide ongoing and additional mental health investments for local communities. I believe those investments go much further to serve people in mental health crisis and reduce gun violence.

Finally, I understand some of you will have different views on SB 941, but as your elected Sheriff, I want to do my best to communicate my position and the reasoning behind it.

Sincerely,



Sheriff Pat Garrett

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