



# WHEELER COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF CHRIS HUMPRHEYS

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SB 941 is an example of extremely bad legislation for several reasons. First and foremost, I believe that it is patently unconstitutional. By forcing law abiding citizens to undergo a background check for private firearms transactions, you are both infringing on a persons' right to bear arms and creating due process issues.

SB941 is also poorly written, with a number of glaring loopholes if you are looking at it from the perspective of trying to enforce the law. When you create "unenforceable" or "vague" laws you only do several things: 1) create issues in the enforcing of the law which leads to 2) costly court litigation in both the civil and criminal courts. This, along with the cost of increased utilization of the OSP background check system only succeeds in making SB941 a waste of much needed resources.

I can say this as one who cut his teeth working for the largest metropolitan police agency in Oregon. I have responded to the drive-by shootings. I have stood in the rain searching the blocks for some firearm "ditched" by a subject who was attempting to elude us after the commission of a crime. I have arrested the "criminals" who had the guns. I know, without a doubt, that if you spoke with those officers and deputies currently working the streets, the ones who actually arrest people who are carrying or possessing firearms illegally (a status already successfully legislated), these same Officers and Deputies would tell you that voluntary universal background checks will not do a thing to keep firearms out of the hands of a motivated offender. I believe any testimony that you may have received stating the contrary is disingenuous. If you want to reduce crime do so by expending our resources in areas that are already acknowledged as being successful: youth educational/self-esteem programs; our mental health system; drug dependency and recovery services.

In Wheeler County, the Constitution is believed to be inviolate. There is a reason the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment gives us the Right to Bear Arms; behind Speech, Religion, Press, and the Right to Assemble, the Right to keep and Bear Arms is the ultimate guarantee of those freedoms. SB941, which is not even being put to a vote of the people, smacks of just what it is; the Government wanting to initiate a registry of privately owned firearms. In the world of government you only keep track of something because you want to tax it or you want to take it.

Wheeler County has only a Sheriff and three Deputies and no other law enforcement agencies housed within the borders of the county. We are sworn to uphold the laws of this State, and we take that charge seriously. Be advised that SB941, with its vagueness and shaky constitutional standing, would require too much time and expenditure of resources that we do not have to fight a problem we do not face.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Humphreys".

Sheriff Chris Humphreys  
Wheeler County (OR)