



The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 100-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.

February 12, 2020

To: [Senate Committee of Judiciary](#)
[Sen. Floyd Prozanski, Chair](#)

Re: [SB 1538](#) - Authorizes local government regulation of firearms in public buildings - **Support**

The League of Women Voters of Oregon strongly supports the active role of government in gun violence prevention. We believe HB 1538 is an important step forward in state law, because it expands the ability of local governmental entities to establish gun-free zones in public buildings. Currently, state law mandates that carriers of concealed handgun licenses (CHLs) are exempted from restrictions on the carrying of firearms within the state. This bill removes that exemption and gives local governments additional power to maintain public safety as they so choose.

Why is this change needed? First, obtaining a CHL in Oregon is a fairly easy process, and today 1 in 16 Oregonians has one—approximately 257,000 people. An applicant must be a citizen or resident alien over 21, pass a State Police background check, have no major legal or mental health flags on his/her record, and demonstrate competence with a handgun. There are a number of choices for demonstrating this competence, but the most expedient way is to successfully complete an online training course administered by the Oregon State Sheriff's Association. Along with 25 other states, Oregon does not require any live fire training to obtain a CHL, making it possible to receive one without ever touching an actual firearm.

Secondly, the proliferation of handguns in our society, the increase in the number of mass shootings, and the need for local law enforcement to deal with the specific security requirements of their local communities makes this change to Oregon's gun laws an important one. In our opinion, a CHL should not automatically convey an absolute right to carry a handgun wherever you wish, just as the Second Amendment, according to Justice Scalia's words in the 2008 D.C. vs Heller decision, does not bestow an unlimited right to "keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose."

The League urges a do-pass recommendation for SB 1538. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca L. Gladstone".

Rebecca Gladstone
LWVOR President

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marge Easley".

Marge Easley
LWVOR Gun Safety Portfolio