

Compromise gives Oregon effective gun laws

Police will have time for records check

By Kym Gilhooly
Emerald Reporter

Oregon's new gun law may not prevent certain people from obtaining guns, but it aims to keep these people from buying them legally.

"I think it's the most comprehensive gun control law in the country, and it's special because it is so comprehensive," said Oregon Speaker of the House Vera Katz, D-Portland.

The new law requires gun dealers to thumbprint any person purchasing a handgun and forward copies of the register to the local sheriff's office and the Oregon State Police.

The law enforcement agencies then will run a records check to determine if the purchaser is a convicted felon or has been found to be mentally ill within the last four years.

The new law also extends the waiting period for delivery of a handgun from five days to 15

days to give law enforcement agencies adequate time to research a purchaser's background.

In addition, the new law requires the Oregon State Police to compile records of firearms sales for one year and deliver findings to the 1991 Legislative Assembly. Gun dealers are required to register the sale of long guns as well as handguns so the legislature can determine how often illegal purchases are attempted.

Oregon statutes define a long gun as a shotgun with a barrel at least 18 inches in length, a rifle with a barrel at least 16 inches in length or any firearm at least 26 inches in total length. Long guns may leave the store with the buyer on the day of purchase and normally require no background check.

Katz said she had been lobbying for new gun control legislation since 1969 but set aside her work on the issue when she became Speaker of the House because "traditionally the speaker's office doesn't get involved in particular issues."

"But the Stockton massacre said to me 'look, more work needs to be done here,'" Katz said.

Katz said she sat down with representatives from state law enforcement agencies, the Pistol and Rifle Association and the National Rifle Association to come up with a bill acceptable to everyone concerned.

"Everyone involved gave and received, and I think we came up with a good compromise," Katz said. "And Oregon's law is unique because the NRA supported fingerprinting and the 15-day waiting period."

Michael Krei, the NRA representative for Oregon and Wash-

ington, said a new law was needed because law enforcement officials wanted a longer waiting period for handgun purchases and the NRA felt that certain counties weren't equitable in their distribution of concealed weapons permits.

"Two ends were met with the new gun legislation," Krei said. "The waiting period for handguns was extended and everyone applying for a concealed weapons permit was treated equally."

"We're (NRA) not a firm believer in the 15-day waiting period, but we were willing to compromise," Krei added.

Krei said the one-year registration requirement for long guns will reveal how many people are attempting to illegally purchase firearms.

"I'll be very interested to see the outcome of the study," Krei

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Fitness frenzy

Cycling team members Guy Jeffress (left) and William Hall demonstrate cycling machines at Wednesday's Fitness Fair.

Photo by Steve Card



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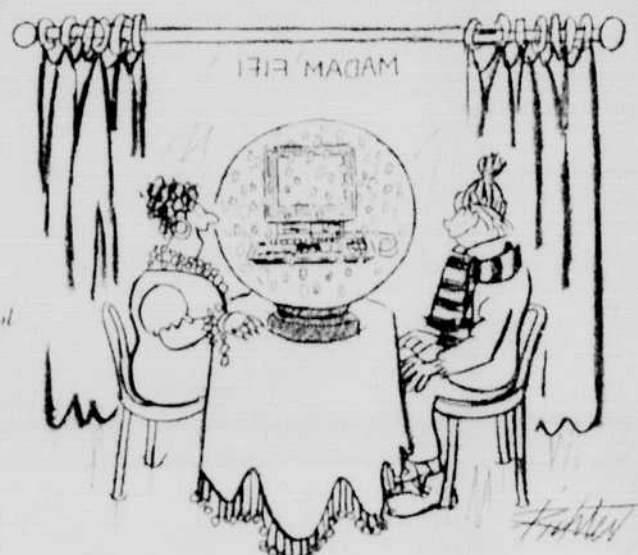
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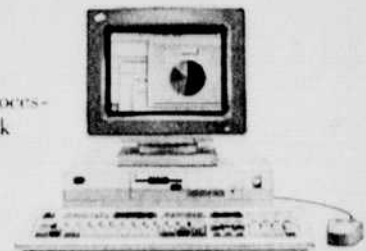
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