

Legislators clamor to change Arkansas' gun law

By David A. Lieb
The Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — The way Arkansas law now stands, the two boys accused of killing five people at their school will be able to own guns the day they get out of the juvenile justice system.

Under state law, adults convicted of felonies can never again possess a gun. But Arkansas youths convicted as juveniles of similar crimes can buy and possess guns the moment they are

released from state supervision at age 18. That's because such youngsters are considered juvenile delinquents, not felons.

The disparity has incensed many Arkansas legislators, who already are rallying to change the state's juvenile laws after the slayings of four girls and a teacher last week at Jonesboro's Westside Middle School.

"As far as I'm concerned, when you murder five people you've forfeited your rights to guns for-

ever," said state Sen. Gene Roebuck, a Democrat from Jonesboro. "I don't think you can ever be trusted with guns again."

Mitchell Johnson, 13, and Andrew Golden, 11, face five counts of murder as juveniles. State law prohibits youths younger than 14 from being charged as adults, and lawmakers cannot change that retroactively.

But legislators may have a better legal case for changing the state's gun-possession laws

retroactively. According to the state attorney general's office, the law in effect at the time of release — not the time of a crime — would determine whether a juvenile offender could carry a gun.

"Laws that do not operate as punishments can apply even to acts that occur prior to the law," said David Raupp, an assistant Arkansas attorney general. "This isn't punishment. This is about whether you have a privilege available to you."

Under Arkansas law, anybody of any age can buy and possess a rifle. Youngsters under 18 cannot buy handguns, but can possess them. Police said the boys in the Jonesboro massacre had three rifles and seven pistols when they opened fire last week.

Some states, including Iowa and North Dakota, already have laws restricting adults who were convicted as juveniles from possessing guns. Most states do not.

Initiative limiting class size appealed

The Associated Press

SALEM — The Oregon Public Employees Union and anti-tax activist Bill Sizemore — usually bitter adversaries — are appealing the ballot wording on an initiative that would limit class sizes.

The two Supreme Court challenges will delay signature-gathering and could keep the measure off the November ballot.

Though Sizemore and OPEU are opposed for different reasons, the effect of both challenges is the same.

"This is typically a delaying tactic to try to keep a measure off the ballot," said John Marshall, lobbyist for Oregon School Boards Association.

Initiative backers want to cap class sizes at 20 students for kindergarten through third grade and 25 students for fourth and fifth. Middle and high school classes would have to average 27 or fewer students.

Backers say the measure ultimately will cost \$124 million per year to hire the extra 3,148 teachers, plus \$300 million for new schools and classroom space. Some estimates run higher.

The measure provides no new revenue, much like the 1994 sentencing initiative that drove up state prison costs. That could force cuts in other state spending.

Sizemore, a Republican gubernatorial candidate and executive director of Oregon Taxpayers United, called the initiative a "money-grab for schools." OPEU, the union representing 22,000 state workers, worries the measure will crimp funds for other state services.

"The costs of this are staggering," said OPEU Executive Director Alice Dale. OPEU wouldn't oppose the measure if it were funded by surplus income tax revenues, which now are returned to taxpayers, she said.

By delaying signature-gathering, opponents can keep measures off the ballot or force campaigns to rely on more paid signature-gatherers.

Get ready for summer! Plan your classes now. The UO Summer Session Bulletin with Schedule of Classes is now available on campus.

The bulletin contains important information about courses and special programs offered this summer, registration, housing, and fees.

Pick up your free copy today at the Summer Session office (333 Oregon Hall) or the UO Bookstore

Telephone (541) 346-3475

<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~uosummer/>

Telephone registration starts May 4.

Here Now! Pick Up Your Free Copy Today.

The university is an equal-opportunity, affirmative-action institution committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Oregon Daily Emerald

The Oregon Daily Emerald is published daily Monday through Friday during the school year and Tuesday and Thursday during the summer by the Oregon Daily Emerald Publishing Co. Inc., at the University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. A member of the Associated Press, the Emerald operates independently of the University with offices in Suite 300 of the Erb Memorial Union. The Emerald is private property. The unlawful removal or use of papers is prosecutable by law.

NEWSROOM — 346-5511

Editor in chief: Sarah Kicker
Managing Editor: Nicole Krueger
Community: Michael Burnham, editor. Tricia Duryee, Jesse Sowa
Entertainment: Evan Denbaum, editor. Shannon Sneed
Higher Education: Laura Cadiz, editor. Nicole Kristal, Teri Meeuwesen, Kari Thorene
In-depth: Ashley Bach
Perspective: Michael Schmierbach, editor. Chris

Hutchinson, illustrator. Jonas Allen, Kameron Cole, Hannah Dillon, Jeff Shaw, columnists.
Student Activities: Doug Irving, editor. Michael Hines, Chris Kenning, Kristina Rudinskas
Sports: Ryan Frank, editor. Chris Hansen, asst. editor. Joel Hood, Rob Moseley, Alex Pond
Copy Desk: Holly Sanders, copy chief. Brian Deka, Tammy Salzman, Kelly Schulze, Shannon Sneed
News Art: Matt Garton, editor. Pamela Sirianni, Cara Strazzo
Photography: Amanda Cowan, Wendy Fuller, Rose

Fung, Laura Goss, Nick Medley, Kristen Sullivan
Freelance: Carl Yeh On-line: Nicholas Stiffler
ADVERTISING — 346-3712
Becky Merchant, director. Yujin Chi, Leigh-Ann Cyboron, Brian Diamond, Chris Erickson, Lindsay Knaak, Andy Lakefish, Justice Rhodes, Erick Schless, Rose Soli, Chris Suydam, Emily Wallace.
CLASSIFIEDS — 346-4343
Anne Nielsen, manager. Heather Moye, Angela McGrath

BUSINESS — 346-5512

General Manager: Judy Riedl
Business: Kathy Carbone, business supervisor. Judy Connolly, receptionist.
Distribution: John Long, Joy Sears, Dave Oval
PRODUCTION — 346-4381
Michele Ross, manager. Tara Sloan, coordinator. Shawna Abele, Joselyn Bickford, Laura Daniel, Susan Head, Leah Lekas, Laura Lucas, Leanne Nelms, Brandt Nelson, Broc Nelson, Katie Nesse, Sylvia Tewes