

OUR VIEW

## Gun storage measure is confusing

No responsible gun owner would object to the basic premise that guns should be stored in a way designed to ensure that nobody who shouldn't have access to the guns will have it.

The National Rifle Association, no fan of restrictions on gun owners, emphasizes safe handling and storage of firearms. One of the NRA's gun safety rules puts it this way: "Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons."

This is basically the ostensible purpose behind a ballot measure that Oregonians could vote on in November 2020 if supporters gather sufficient signatures.

But that measure, No. 40, also includes some provisions that seem intended more to discourage people from owning guns at all, rather than to prompt them to safely store their firearms.

Section 1 of the measure requires gun owners to "secure" all firearms, or face potential fines.

The measure defines a "secure" gun as one with an engaged trigger lock or cable lock, or that is stored in a "locked container, equipped with a tamper-resistant lock."

The measure also calls for the Oregon Health Authority to adopt temporary rules by Jan. 1, 2021, setting minimum specifications for those locks and containers, and to adopt permanent rules for those specifications by July 1, 2021.

Using locks, or locked containers, is a legitimate, and common, way for gun owners to secure their firearms.

But the measure would also impose on gun owners a much more stringent, and potentially unrealistic, legal standard.

It reads in part: "... a firearm is not secured if a key, combination or other means of opening a lock or container is readily available to a person the owner or possessor has not authorized to carry or control the firearm."

The key phrases in the preceding sentence are "or other means" and "readily available."

If we're going to require gun owners to secure guns with locks, it's sensible to also ensure that they keep track of the keys, or combinations, that open those locks.

But mandating, at penalty of law, that gun owners also ensure that nobody can have "other means" to access a locked gun is such a broad requirement that in effect it means if anybody gets your gun, by any means, it's your fault, legally speaking.

What if the "other means" is a pair of bolt cutters, an item that's "readily available" at any hardware store?

The measure also states that "space within a vehicle" does not qualify as a container that meets the requirement for "secure" storage. This ignores the growing availability of lockable storage spaces, particularly in pickup trucks, which could be nearly as secure as a locked container inside a home.

Measure 40's backers have good intentions, but the initiative doesn't deserve voters' support as written.



MY VOICE

## Our Vietnam veterans deserve a memorial in Salem by 2022

On Nov. 11, 1969, Operation Fulton Square in the Quang Tri Province was in full force with the assistance of the 1st Marine Division, 101st Airborne Division and the 5th Infantry Division. This was one of 20 operations active throughout Vietnam. There were more than 500,000 United States military personnel assigned to the Vietnam War Zone.

Yes, Veterans Day 50 years ago was very different than this year. While today we have troops assigned to operations in the Middle East, we must realize that in 1969 the Vietnam War was raging. Identified as the second most deadly year of the Vietnam era, 11,780 United States warriors were killed in action in 1969.

All totaled, more than 58,000 of our troops died in Vietnam, and 710 were from Oregon.

Man of those who survived the war and returned home were not welcomed or treated with respect or honor. Most of these dedicated soldiers never heard the words "thank you" or "welcome home." As a result, when it came to Veterans Day in 1969 and subsequent years, most Vietnam veterans did not wish to participate. These warriors did their duty, served our country and were rebuked because of an unpopular war.

Sal Esquivel, former Oregon legislator and a Vietnam veteran, stated: "We were not supported in the field, we were not supported by our government, we were not supported by the people and many of us were treated poorly when we came home."

When you look around our Capitol City of Salem, you can find memorials built to honor the veterans of every war and conflict with the exception of Operation Desert Storm and the Vietnam War. Once again, there is evidence of the poor treatment received by our Vietnam veterans.

Oregon can do better. There are Oregonians who want everyone to remember our Vietnam veterans. A Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds to the south of the World War II Memorial is proposed.

**My Voice ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Steve Bates has resided in Boring for 42 years and is a life member



of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America. He serves as chair of the Committee on Memorials and

Remembrance and as president of the Vietnam War Memorial Fund. My Voice columns reflect the views of the author only. My Voice columns should be 500-700 words or as space allows. Submissions should include a portrait-type photograph of the author. Authors also should include their full name, age, occupation and relevant organizational memberships. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We reject those published elsewhere. Send columns to La Grande Observer, 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, 97850, fax them to 541-963-7804 or email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com.

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same for the Vietnam War veterans. The Vietnam veterans are the sons and daughters of the Greatest Generation. The Vietnam veterans went to war to serve as their fathers and mothers did. It is fitting that our Oregon State Capitol Grounds would honor these two generations. With the completion of the Vietnam War Memorial, together these two memorials will honor more than 75% of Oregon's war dead. But, memorials do not just honor those who died. Memorials honor all who served.

Veterans Day is designated to honor our military veterans who are still with us. The average age of our Vietnam veterans is now older than 70. We are slowly losing our Vietnam veterans. To show our Vietnam veterans the esteem they deserve, a goal has been established to honor them with a Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds by Veterans Day 2022.

Will you join this effort? Please send your contribution by check to: Vietnam War Memorial Fund, P.O. Box 1448, Boring 97009. You can donate by credit card on the secure website at: www.vietnamwarmemorialfund.org.

On Veterans Day, we should thank all of our veterans for their service. Especially our Vietnam veterans.

Over the past two years, dozens of volunteers have attended meetings and performed research. The end result of these efforts is a viable design for a Vietnam Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds.

The proposed Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds will remember the Oregonians who gave the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. It will honor the four Oregon families who lost two sons to that war. In addition to historic accounts of the Vietnam War, the design includes a memorial to the six Oregonians who died in Operation Desert Storm.

Just as Oregon saluted the Greatest Generation with a World War II Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol Grounds, it is time for Oregon to do the

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