

Local

Gun control: Senate Bill 941

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Transfer, for the purposes of this bill means “the delivery of a firearm from a transferor to a transferee, including, but not limited to, the sale, gift, loan or lease of the firearm.”

The bill also “requires the Department of State Police to notify local law enforcement agency when, during criminal background check performed prior to transfer of firearm, department determines that recipient is prohibited from possessing firearm. Authorizes court to prohibit person ordered to participate in assisted outpatient treatment from purchasing or possessing firearm during period of treatment if certain criteria are met.”

Certain portions of the bill are exempted for a person’s immediate family members.

Current Oregon law already prevents felons and the mentally ill from owning firearms, and opponents say this bill simply targets the law-abiding gun owners.

Several county Sheriffs across Oregon, including Sheriff Glenn Palmer of adjoining Grant County, have stepped up to oppose. Palmer has called the bill “borderline treasonous” and states that it is unenforceable.

Newly appointed Baker County Interim Sheriff, Travis Ash, who steps into his new role May 1, agrees heartily on Palmer’s last point.

Said Ash, “I have read SB 941 and I don’t see where it is going to prevent criminals from obtaining firearms. We currently have laws that prohibit certain criminals from possessing firearms, but they still obtain them illegally.

“I do believe that it is going to cause an unnecessary financial burden for taxpayers with the increased demand on Oregon State Police performing background checks. I also believe that it is going to be huge inconvenience and increase expense for law-abiding citizens that want to purchase firearms.”

Local City police here aren’t impressed with the potential of this law, either. Said Baker City Police Chief Wyn Lohner, “I think it will have very little, if any, effect on keeping firearms out of the hands of criminals. Criminals typically don’t buy their firearms from honest citizens and if they did, as soon as going to a dealer for a background check was mentioned, the criminal would go another direction.”

Lohner added, “This law, as I read it, will be next to impossible to enforce. Unless some law enforcement entity runs a ‘sting’ and poses as a firearms buyer, trying to see if an honest citizen will sell a gun without first going to a dealer and completing a background check, it will require a citizen complaint. Even with a complaint, the investigation would be extremely difficult due to all the exceptions in the law.”

Many elected officials are upset with the process and the way this bill has been “fast-tracked” from the start. State Rep. Greg Barreto from nearby Cove said in a press release, “I’m very disappointed that the Committee Chairman would limit public discussion on such an important bill.

“On Wednesday, April 1, dozens of Oregonians from across the state traveled to the Capitol to testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee regarding Senate Bill 941, legislation that expands background checks to the private sale of firearms. Of the more than 100 registered witnesses, 94% of those who signed up to speak in favor of the bill were allowed to testify, while only 19% of those who planned to speak in opposition were allowed to voice their concerns.”

In total, at least 68 Oregonians who planned to testify against SB 941 were denied the opportunity to do so, including several individuals who traveled more than 100 miles.

“I’m even more upset,” said Barreto, “to learn that one of my constituents, who took a day off from work and traveled more than five hours in order to speak on this issue, was turned away by the committee. Oregonians deserve better from their Legislature.”

That individual, Irene Gilbert, a gun store manager from La Grande, traveled several hundred miles (610 miles round trip) before being denied the opportunity to voice her concerns about the legislation.

Gilbert penned a letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee later that day. She writes, “This is the second time I have sent this testimony and comments regarding SB 941. It has not been published with the other public testimony on the bill. Given that I was denied an opportunity to speak by the chairman of this committee, I hope you will see to it that my comments are posted tomorrow on the public record for

this bill.”

Gilbert continues, “I drove five hours ... from La Grande, Oregon to get to testify for two minutes in front of the above committee. I listened to multiple speakers from California, Washington, and other states interjecting their opinions about what Oregon should be doing. I heard as much misinformation regarding facts and figures as I have heard in a two-hour period in my entire life. What I did not hear was the testimony of hundreds of Oregonians including myself who were not provided the opportunity to testify. The head of this committee has apparently forgotten that he is supposed to be representing the citizens of Oregon. Those are the people who will have to live with the legislation that is passed in this state.”

Gilbert points to the added expense, time for those in rural areas to travel to a dealer, and a host of delays and flaws in the already existing state registration system. She says, “Of the cases denied, by far the majority are due to an expired drivers license, an error in the home address on the driver’s license or another simple error. When cases are pending, it can take several weeks for a response which is normally an approval.”

She adds, “The one denial I processed during the past six months was a young boy who came in with his mother to purchase his first gun. The policeman came in for the information on the purchaser while they were still in the store. He talked to them and said that it was no big deal and he had told them how to fix the problem. By making the failure to complete this paper process a Class A Misdemeanor you put a paper processing failure in the same category as assault in the fourth degree or theft in the second degree. This means that issuing citations for this infraction will result in more verbal and physical abuse or death of police officers, will consume hours of their time due to the increase in court time that will be required. Since it is recommended that anyone charged with a Class A Misdemeanor be represented by an attorney, the bill serves no one other than the attorneys of the state.”

“This bill places a disproportionate burden on those in rural and economically depressed areas and removes our police officers from providing protection for serious crimes as well



Submitted Photo.

Sen. Floyd Prozanski.

as requiring jail space to incarcerate otherwise law abiding citizens,” Gilbert states.

Gilbert concludes, “We do not need the additional liability of keeping people’s firearms on pending cases. It opens us up to accusations that we have damaged a gun, or whatever. In addition, we do not need to assume additional liability for having accurate records when we are visited by ATF. The last time we were inspected, we had two men who recorded every serial number of every gun in the store and made sure they were all correctly logged in. They then reviewed every gun we sold to make sure every box was correctly filled and check mark made. We were notified that we had not always checked the ‘proceed’ box even though we had recorded the release number on some of the forms. I could continue with facts, however, it appears that there is little interest in hearing facts about the consequences of this bill.

“What I will say is this: In my sixty-plus years in this state, I can say with confidence that those controlling this legislature have done more harm to the freedom and pocketbooks of the people of this state in the name of ‘protecting’ us than any other group coming before you. Please just leave our constitution alone!”

On Monday, an amendment to the bill, which was proposed by Sen. Kim Thatcher, was shot down and the existing bill left standing.

More specifically, the amendment would have made individuals who transfer a gun to a prohibited person criminally liable whether the transferor knew the recipient was prohibited or not. This would act as incentive for individuals to perform due diligence when selling a weapon without mandating background checks for all private gun transfers.

“Mandating background checks on private gun sales will do little in the way of preventing gun violence and stopping criminals from obtaining a gun,” said Thatcher. “My amendment would have been a great compromise which would have encouraged more due diligence in private gun sales while also protecting law-abiding Oregon gun owners.”

Republicans in the Senate and House remain locked solidly against the bill, and only Democratic Senator Betsy Johnson has parted ways with her side of the aisle to oppose it.

In total, the bill is 23 pages long and is expected to take its next step toward becoming a law in the very near future.

Bandstand

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John Phillip Sousa, who was also known as the American March king, was a composer and conductor known for military and patriotic Marches. Sousa composed such works as *Semper Fidelis*, the official March of the Marine Corps and *The Stars And Stripes Forever*, the national March of The United States of America.

“Now we are going to break ground for our new Powder River Pavilion,” Hunsaker said.

He specifically acknowledged what he called “the original dream team”—Al Durgan and Phyllis Badgley. “If they hadn’t come up with idea to replace it we wouldn’t be here today. This has been a true community project, and critical to its success have been the many individual donations from near and far, including Scotland.”

Although some donors wished to remain anonymous others were recognized including The Baker City Bandstand Committee consisting of Lynette Perry, Marvin Sundean, Cindy Endicott, Joyce Badgley Hunsaker, and Dave Hunsaker.

“The Soroptimists International, Baker County have been our nonprofit partner the whole way and we deeply appreciate their support. Thanks to Baker City Council, Mayors both past and present, and city staff they have been fabulous to work with. We’d also like to thank the Leo Adler Foundation; they have been with us from day one, The Ford Family Foundation Fund, The Pease Family Fund and Triple C Redi-Mix who is donating all the concrete for this project. Natural Structures has been working with us patiently in all our changes, trials and tribulations. Baker County is known for being hands on, can do, coming up with an idea, figuring out how to get to its goal and being persistent enough to see it through. This project is a perfect example of the get’er done attitude. We thank the community for its patience and steadfast support. Thank you all very much for being here, we are going to break some ground now,” Hunsaker said.

After a countdown, the group dug their shovels in and overturned ground signifying the start of the exciting and anticipated project.

Former Baker City Mayor and current City Councilman Richard Langrell said, “It was a real good turnout.”

The bandstand design is an open concept that is intended to discourage vandalism. Dedication of the new bandstand will be announced at a later date upon completion and is expected to be sometime before Miner’s Jubilee in July.

In addition to the numerous fundraisers held, commemorative bricks, tiles and columns were sold to help fund the project. Although the bandstand maintenance will be turned over to the city, no city funds were utilized in the project.

As disclosed at a previous meeting any money left over after the completion of the bandstand will be turned over to the City to assist in costs associated to the bandstand.

Additional information regarding the bandstand including design can be seen on the website bakercitybandstand.org.

A complete list of contributors including names of those that have purchased bricks, tiles and columns can also be accessed and the website acknowledges that while every small contributor may not be specifically recognized they are no less important. Before the crowd dispersed, it was brought to everyone’s attention that Phyllis Badgley was celebrating her 91st birthday.

The crowd paid tribute by singing a round of Happy Birthday.

The celebrating has already begun.

Hells Canyon to one lane

OXBOW, Oregon, April 3, 2015 — Vehicles crossing Hells Canyon Dam will continue to be restricted to one lane for several weeks while Idaho Power crews perform maintenance on the dam.

Flaggers at either end of the dam will control traffic while work is taking place, usually between 8 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. each day, Monday through Thursday. Although flaggers will not be present at night or on Fridays, the road will still be restricted to one lane by equipment on the dam; motorists are urged to use extra caution when crossing.

Additionally, a reader board is in place at Oxbow to warn drivers of the road restriction.

The lane restriction is necessary to allow crews to safely perform maintenance work on the dam’s intake gates. Completed in 1967, Hells Canyon Dam is Idaho Power’s second-largest dam in terms of electricity generation. It has a nameplate capacity of 391.5 megawatts.

3-Gun Match Series May 16

The Powder River Sportsmen’s Club is conducting a 3-Gun Match Series beginning May 16 at the Virtue Flat Shooting Range. Prizes will be awarded to beginner, Intermediate, and Expert Classes at the end-of-season match on September 26. Visitors and new shooters are always welcome. Series competition is not required; occasional shooters are welcome too! Visit www.baker3gun.com for details and contact information, or call David Spough at 541-519-8298. If you are interested in 3-Gun but have never shot a match, we’ll be happy to help you get started. Specialized equipment is not a requirement for participation in practical shooting sports!

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