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# Ore. teacher challenges no-gun-at-school ban

*THE ASSOCIATED PRESS*

MEDFORD, Ore. — High school English teacher Shirley Katz insists she needs to take her pistol with her to work because she fears her ex-husband could show up and try to harm her. She's also worried about a Columbine-style attack.

But Katz's district has barred teachers from bringing guns to school, so she is challenging the ban as unlawful, since Oregon is among states that allow people with a permit to carry concealed weapons into public buildings.

"This is primarily about my Second Amendment right and Oregon law and the simple fact that I know it is my right to carry that gun," said Katz, 44, sitting at the kitchen table of her home outside this city of 74,000.

"I have that (concealed weapons) permit. I refuse to let my ex-husband bully me. And I am not going to let the school board bully me, either."

In Oregon, a sheriff can grant a concealed-weapons permit to anyone whose criminal record is clean and who completes a gun-safety course.

Superintendent Phil Long insists employees and students are safer without guns on campus at South Medford High School, where Katz teaches. The district plans to make that argument when the case comes before a judge on Thursday.

Katz's request appears to be rare. School security consultant Ken Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services in Cleveland, said he has never heard of a similar case while working in 45 states.

Katz won't say whether she has ever taken her 9 mm Glock pistol to school, but she practices with it regularly and has thought about what she would do if she had to confront a gunman. She would be sure students were locked in nearby offices out of the line of fire, and she would be ready with her pistol.

"Our safety plan at our school now is that if somebody threatening comes in, you try to avoid eye contact, and do whatever they say, and that is not acceptable anymore," she said. Shootings at Virginia Tech University and the one-room Amish school in Pennsylvania, "reinforced my belief we have to take action, we can't just acquiesce as we have been taught to do."

Oregon had a school shooting in 1998, when student Kip Kinkel killed his parents at home, then drove to school and opened fire in the cafeteria of Thurston High School in Springfield, killing two and wounding 25 others.

Since then, the Legislature has considered barring people with concealed weapons permits from carrying guns in schools, but the bills have failed, said Dori Brattain, general counsel to the Oregon School Boards Association.

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