



# State of Connecticut

## SENATE

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Good Morning Senator McDonald, Representative Lawlor and members of the Judiciary Committee. I am here today to express my support for HB 5818, An Act Concerning Lost or Stolen Firearms. I believe that vigilant pursuit and documentation of stolen or lost firearms could reduce violent crime.

Federal law requires that a gun dealer report any theft or loss of firearms from inventory within 48 hours. Violation of the federal act carries a stiff penalty (5 years in prison and/or \$250,000). Unfortunately, the federal law does not apply to non-dealers and firearms "lost" by non-dealers certainly contribute to violent crime. Many guns are in fact targeted by thieves. Equally disturbing, however, is the process by which guns are moved into the illegal market by "straw purchasers" who can own guns and buy them in order to sell them to

people who are prohibited from owning guns. When a gun that has been used in a crime is traced back to the purchaser/trafficker, the purchaser claims that the gun was stolen. Prosecution of the "straw purchasers" is not possible because our laws do not require reporting of stolen firearms.

HB 5818 would require that a gun owner who is not in actual physical possession of the gun keep it stored in a manner that will reduce the risk of theft; it also requires that the loss or theft of a firearm be reported to a law enforcement agency. In addition, the bill would provide that evidence that a pistol or revolver which is found not in possession of the owner creates prima facie evidence that the owner had transferred such pistol or revolver without proper application and authorization. This last provision would make prosecution of the "straw purchasers" a possibility in Connecticut and thus has the potential to reduce gun violence. This legislation would protect our citizens from unscrupulous gun traffickers without placing unnecessary regulation on legitimate gun owners.

Thank you.