



# CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

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## **Testimony to the Judiciary Committee Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association March 24, 2006**

**On behalf of the Connecticut Police Chiefs and our officers, we support RB #5818, AAC Lost or Stolen Firearms.**

We need to keep guns out of the wrong hands; you cannot read the morning paper without being reminded. In 2004\*, firearms were used in approximately 66% of the murders, 41% of the robberies, and 19% of aggravated assaults nationwide. Connecticut's figures\*\* were not much better (59, 35, and 11% respectively). Convicted felons cannot buy guns legally; they can only get them through theft or illegal re-sale. This bill will make both methods more difficult.

The bill will require gun owners to store guns safely when not carrying them, and will require the owner of a firearm to report its theft or loss to police.

When a citizen reports his gun stolen he will set in motion a nation-wide effort to recover it. The gun's description and serial number will be entered into the National Crime Information Center's computer stolen-gun file, and will be checked by any officer encountering a suspicious gun. The report will hasten the capture of the thief or subsequent illegal possessor, and will allow the gun's prompt return to its rightful owner. No law-abiding gun owner should object to this.

The bill will also hamper black-market gun-dealers called "straw buyers," dishonest people with clean records who buy multiple guns for re-sale to robbers, gang members and other felons. When a gun used in a crime is traced to a straw buyer, all he has to do is claim it was stolen. Without a reporting requirement, the investigation hits a dead end. This bill will provide incentive for the illegal dealer to reveal who received the gun.

Furthermore, it will help get firearms away from domestic abusers who become ineligible to possess guns. A spouse-beater may falsely claim his gun was stolen rather than surrender it; these bogus claims are hard to refute without mandatory reporting.

Like firearms, automobiles are manufactured for lawful purposes and are misused by lawbreakers, sometimes lethally. Connecticut law requires you to report it if your car is stolen. Why should we treat guns with less care than cars?

**We urge you to support this bill.**

\* Crime in the United States, 2004

\*\* Crime in Connecticut, 2003