



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

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Testimony of the Division of Criminal Justice

In Support of:

S.B. No. 903 (COMM) AN ACT CONCERNING LOST OR STOLEN FIREARMS

**S.B. No. 904 (COMM) AN ACT REQUIRING FIREARMS DEALERS TO REPORT
LOST OR STOLEN FIREARMS**

**H.B. No. 6901 (COMM) AN ACT TO FIGHT VIOLENT CRIME ARISING FROM
LOST OR STOLEN FIREARMS**

Joint Committee on Judiciary – April 10, 2007

The Division of Criminal Justice commends the Committee for its efforts in trying to deal with the issue of “straw purchases” of illegal firearms, which have become a significant problem particularly in our inner cities. The proliferation of illegal firearms, and the resulting death and injury, has reached crisis proportions which must be addressed as soon as possible.

The three bills that are before you assist in the efforts to prevent “straw purchases” by removing the ability of those involved in illegal transactions to hide behind a claim that the weapon was lost or stolen when, in fact, it was traded for cash or drugs.

The Division believes that these three bills can be strengthened to provide a more effective deterrent to “straw purchases” by making the penalties for the failure to store a firearm safely where the firearm is subsequently recovered by law enforcement officials a class A misdemeanor. For any person that fails to report the theft or loss of a firearm within 72 hours after the theft or loss was known or discovered or should have been known or discovered, the Division feels that the appropriate penalties are a five hundred dollar fine for an unintentional violation and a class A misdemeanor for an initial intentional violation and a class D felony for any subsequent intentional violation.

The Division would also urge the Committee to consider adopting a Joint Favorable Substitute to these three bills to include a provision stating that evidence that a

law enforcement official seized or recovered a firearm that was not in the possession of the owner at the time of the seizure is prima facie evidence of a violation of the transfer requirements of Section 29-33 of our general statutes. As set forth in our legislative proposals, the Division also suggests that the Committee consider adding a provision which would provide that the reporting of the theft or loss of a firearm is an affirmative defense to any charged violation of the transfer requirements of Section 29-33.