

**TESTIMONY OF I. CHARLES MATHEWS
IN SUPPORT OF HOUSE BILL 6901 AND SENATE BILL 903
Requiring the Reporting of Lost and Stolen Firearms**

April 10, 2007

My name is I. Charles Mathews and I am a resident of Hartford. I'd like to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill 6901 and Senate Bill 903, which would require the timely reporting of lost and stolen firearms.

Some people oppose this bill because they feel it will limit the right of Americans to bear arms. Some believe the bill places unfair liability on innocent gun owners who may not realize their guns have been lost or stolen. Still others feel it is a half-hearted attempt to deal with the issue of gun violence in this country.

Regardless of one's position on those stances, there remains one, undeniable truth: Too many young people are losing their lives to guns, and more often than not those guns have been acquired illegally. And quite frankly, these two items of legislations are about saving lives, reducing violence in our cities and making Connecticut better for all of us.

Several years ago, we realized that a child had a much better chance of surviving a car accident if they were in a car seat. We realized adults stood a better chance of surviving that accident if they wore a seatbelt. These bills acknowledge a similar realization: If guns are reported lost or stolen in a timely fashion, they are less likely to wind up in the hands of someone who'll use it to impact – or worse... end another person's life. If you could take a simple step and reduce the likelihood of causing someone else's death, why wouldn't you? And wouldn't you want someone else to do nothing if you knew it would save the life of your parent, spouse or child?

For those who say there's so much more work we all must do to curb gun violence, I agree completely. But these Bills are a basic, no-nonsense first step.

We hold citizens responsible for removing snow and ice from their properties, for paying their taxes, and for registering and insuring their motor vehicles. We do that to ensure a better quality of life for everyone. Why then is it too much to expect that those who purchase guns be required to assume similar responsibility for that property?

All of us have been impacted at some level by gun violence. Passing this legislation will reduce the likelihood that more people are impacted by guns.

Help us reduce violence and fear within our community....Help us save a life.

Support House Bill 6901 and Senate Bill 903. Thank you.