

March 22, 2011

Dear Senators and Representatives of the Judiciary Committee;

My name is Gary Lenk. I am a life-long resident of West Hartford and a retired police officer, with 24 years of service in the West Hartford Police Dept. I am currently employed in a retail gun store.

I wish to register my strong objections to proposed bill SB No.1094. Apparently there are people who really believe that this legislation, if passed, will make Connecticut a safer place. I fail to see how this could be a possibility, as high-capacity magazines will remain in common usage in the other states around us and even a cursory examination of the various mass shooting that have occurred around the country in recent years will show that none of them were casual spur-of-the-moment events. Each of the perpetrators of these heinous crimes arrived at their destination after planning out their crimes and carefully preparing for them. Are we to believe that the inconvenience of driving across a state line to stock up on magazines would deter such attacks? Do we really think that a person bent on mass slaughter would be stopped by the fear of being prosecuted for having an illegal magazine? I would hope not.

On the other side of the coin, what would the effects of this legislation be on the law-abiding citizens of Connecticut? It would wreak havoc on the lives and activities of many of our citizens who would be faced with the prospect of their legally-owned pistols being turned into expensive paperweights because for many of them, ten-shot magazines simply don't exist. There are numerous makes and models of pistols that have been introduced since the end of the federal Assault Weapon Ban. There were never any ten-shot magazines made for them and none exist today. What are these gun owners supposed to do? The proponents of this magazine ban may ask "What do people need those high capacity magazines for, anyway?" The simple answer is; "They need them because they are the only magazines in existence that will work in their pistols." They simply have no choice.

Even for the models of pistols and rifles that were made during the federal ban, the ten-shot magazines that were mandated during that ten-year period have long ago been discarded. Why keep them when full-capacity magazines are cheap and easy to obtain? How many manufacturers will now be willing to design, manufacture and market ten-shot magazines for one state? Not many.

If a gun owner in Connecticut tries to comply with this proposed law by modifying his or her magazines so they only hold ten rounds, they then have to figure out exactly what method will comply with the requirement that the modification be permanent. While I am not a machinist, I have watched enough of their work to know that when it comes to metal, nothing is permanent. Any added metal can be removed and any removed metal can be replaced by welding. What legal

standard will the police of Connecticut be given to work with? How many of our precious law enforcement resources will be used up in trying to prosecute offenders?

I will also point out that firearms can be valuable collectable artifacts and the magazines that accompany them are part of the mechanism that cannot be separated from the rest of it. The magazines alone can be collectable and very expensive. I recently saw an ad on an internet sales site for an original 100-round drum magazine for the Thompson sub-machinegun. The asking price was \$6,400. How many collectable magazines with a zero chance of being involved in a crime will be affected by this legislation?

From working in a retail gun store I can attest to the mass confusion generated by the state's Assault Weapon Ban. This confusion over what is legal and what is not continues to this day, almost 17 years after its enactment. We still have people wander into our store on a fairly regular basis with unregistered assault weapons, looking to sell them and blissfully unaware that the firearms are illegal. If this magazine ban goes into effect, illegal magazines will be surfacing in this state for decades. How many prison cells are we willing to fill to enforce this useless law?

At the same time our legislators are discussing decriminalizing marijuana in order to lessen the strain on our law enforcement and corrections resources, I find it incredible that those same legislators are discussing the creation of another victimless crime that will turn thousands of Connecticut citizens into instant felons.

Please- vote "No" on this bill.

If any member of this committee should have questions regarding firearms and firearms laws in this state, I would be most happy to attempt to answer them.

Respectfully submitted,

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