

Chairmen and Members of the committee:

My name is John Sturmer. I live in Stratford, CT.

I am appearing to testify in **OPPOSITION** of Senate Bill 1094, An Act Banning Large Capacity Magazine

I oppose this bill for the following reasons:

THE BILL WILL BE INEFFECTIVE IN PREVENTING GUN CRIME AND VIOLENCE:

While I applaud the committee's efforts to keep CT safe and prevent gun violence, I am concerned that this legislation will not come close to accomplishing that goal. Supporters of this bill point at Tuscon, AZ, Ft. Hood, Tx, and the CT Warehouse shooting as examples of mass murder with high capacity magazines. There is another shooting that they fail to mention: Columbine. I bring up this tragedy primarily because it occurred in 1999... halfway through the federal assault weapons ban, including a ban on "High Capacity" magazines. This shooting also occurred in a school; a place where firearms are prohibited by federal and most state laws. Furthermore, the shooters were underage; another factor that made them prohibited from owning ANY firearms. They still managed to bring a duffel bag full of firearms spend 49 minutes hunting down and shooting their fellow students. The number of rounds they could carry in each magazine was clearly irrelevant. This is the problem with arbitrary and unenforceable bans that only impact those of us who follow the law, and own firearms responsibly.

The problem with the effectiveness of this law is that it targets the wrong people; people who legally own firearms for a multitude of purposes. Since we try to obey the law, we will turn in these devices if this law requires it. I am concerned that criminals who already possess firearms of ANY type illegally will not comply with this law, making the problem worse, not better. Murder, Assault, Robbery and Burglary are already serious felonies. I highly doubt the people intent on committing these crimes will be concerned about adding 1 more felony to their record.

Another problem with the effectiveness of this law is that magazines of this type are very common and readily available in 43 other states. It would not be outside the realm of possibility to think about a person intent on murder and mayhem driving to another state and purchasing a high capacity magazine. Once again, the problem is that only those who are criminals would purchase a magazine with the intent to commit a violent crime. Those of us who comply are not the people who are going to commit these violent acts. Criminals by definition commit criminal acts. This bill goes nowhere in addressing that basic fact.

THE BILL WILL CAUSE GREAT ECONOMIC HARDSHIP ON THE GUN DEALERS IN CT, WHICH ARE EXCLUSIVELY SMALL BUSINESSES:

With 1 exception, EVERY gun shop in CT could be considered a small business. At least half of the inventory of the shops I frequent consists of double stacked semi-automatic firearms. Every one of those firearms would be illegal under this proposal. The very day that this law takes effect, it would render every one of these items worthless. Additionally, every one of these firearms is built in a factory, by a machine.

The magazine wells are designed to take ONLY double stacked magazines. Since 47 states currently allow these magazines, it is unlikely that manufacturers would design special magazines for the Connecticut market. They would simply stop doing business here; depriving small businesses of much needed sales, depriving citizens of a means to defend themselves, and depriving CT of much needed tax revenue. From an economic standpoint, this bill is utterly irresponsible.

THE BILL IS IMPRACTICAL TO ENFORCE, AND IMPRACTICAL TO COMPLY WITH:

I am curious how the state plans to enforce this law. It seems as though the law will require, or at least permit the State Police to show up at the homes of every gun owner in CT with a search warrant. This is NOT what America is all about. Additionally, how are we going to pay for this additional enforcement? What about giving compensation for the seized magazines?

THE BILL WILL PLACE AN UNDUE COST ON GUN OWNERS IN CT:

Most gun owners in CT have made significant investments into their training and equipment. The state is effectively seizing property without just compensation. Additionally, the magazine described in the law that has been "Modified to accept only 10 rounds" do not exist for many of the most common handguns on the market. This law would turn these guns into expensive paperweights. The only option is to sell them out of state, and that will add the additional cost of a dealer transfer fee to get rid of the now useless firearm.

THE BILL IS UNCONSTITUTIONAL, VIOLATING THE ARTICLE 1 SECTION 9 OF THE US CONSTITUTION AS WELL AS THE DUE PROCESS CLAUSE AND JUST COMPENSATION CLAUSE OF AMENEDMENT V TO THE US CONSTITUTION:

This bill outlaws property that is already owned when the law goes into effect and criminalizes that action. The US Constitution prohibits this action in Article I, sec. 9 re: Bills of Attainder which are prohibited. Secondly, this law requires that lawfully acquired and owned property be seized without a trial, a jury, a conviction, even a basic hearing or any other due process of law, and without any compensation. Even criminals who own illegal guns are treated better than this at a voluntary gun buy-back.

In summary, I once again applaud your attempts to curb gun violence, but I respectfully state that this bill is NOT the right answer. It is ineffective, arbitrary, misguided, unfair, unconstitutional and just plain wrong.

Respectfully Submitted,

John Sturmer
Stratford, CT