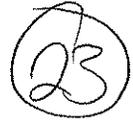


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Testimony in opposition to S.B. No. 1017 AN ACT CONCERNING THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND HOMELAND SECURITY AND THE BOARD OF FIREARMS PERMIT EXAMINERS INTO THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY, AND TRANSFERRING RESPONSIBILITY FOR AMUSEMENT PARK OVERSIGHT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER PROTECTION

I testified just two weeks ago on a bill to improve the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners (BFPE) and a timely process for a hearing. Though there is clearly a need to improve the timeliness of the process, the need for an independent BFPE is undeniable.

I have taken it upon myself to observe some BFPE hearings in order to make myself a more informed firearms instructor. I feel it is important as an instructor to guide citizens that attend my classes on how to follow through the entire firearms permitting process (which especially at the town/municipal level needs improvement).

I have learned on several cases why an independent board benefits CT citizens. There are many cases where a permit is revoked by state agents (especially the CT State Police). On a great number of those cases (a quick observation) close to half of the appellants are granted the return of their rights.

I find it hard that the appellant can feel they are getting a fair hearing when the very department that revoked their permit, is also overseeing the restoration of their right to have a permit.

In a clear comparison, let's look at this from a different perspective. Across the nation, we've seen the importance and value of civilian review boards with police departments. The single largest factor in the success of those boards is quite clear. Having a civilian review board that is independent of police departments is the only way citizens can feel they have any chance at a fair investigation. It is quite clear that a citizen that feels victimized by a law enforcement agency would not feel any benefit to complain to that same agency knowing they will conduct the investigation. As we have seen over the past three decades in New York, Los Angeles and many other cities across the nation with police corruption, independent review boards indeed work.

I encourage everyone to go to the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners and do the research for yourself. Board hearings are available online in both audio and written minutes. It won't take long to realize that CT can be proud of a system that is working.

In a time where we have so many issues facing this state, I find it hard to understand how tearing apart a program that is staffed by a volunteer board and only one paid administrative staff (which as I understand it only working for the board on a part time basis) can benefit CT, its residents and law abiding citizens who possess a firearms permit. It is obvious the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners is clearly one of the biggest bargains to be found in CT state government! Consolidation clearly wouldn't contribute financially towards our state's budgetary issues facing us at this time.

I hope after careful consideration, the committee would agree and vote against S.B. No. 1017.