

16

February 22, 2011

Testimony of:
Michael J. Butler
3 Wellsweep Lane
Killingworth, CT 06419
Life Member, NRA
Member, CCDL

Esteemed Chair and Members:

It is my purpose here to communicate my strong OPPOSITION to **SB1017 AN ACT CONSOLIDATING STATE AGENCIES AND ELIMINATING CERTAIN LEGISLATIVE COMMISSIONS**; in particular to the provision that would transfer operations of the Board of Firearm Permit Examiners (BFPE) to the Department of Public Safety.

This oversight board was established over 40 years ago as an independent agency due to police abusing their discretion by creating their own rules and standards for firearms permits. The 7 unpaid volunteers receive no compensation, and a secretary and office expenses cost the state less than \$100,000. Placing the Board under the DPS and subordinating the Board to the State Police would save little to nothing—and might even cost more.

The Board is the primary appeals process for those aggrieved by denial or revocation of Permits by police agencies. For those who cannot afford expensive litigation, it is their only hope and last resort.

As a member of the Connecticut Citizens Defense League almost since its inception, I have heard the narratives of many citizens who have come to the monthly meetings to describe their difficulties in obtaining their permits at the hands of local police departments displaying indifference if not overt hostility to citizens' Second Amendment rights, and we have heard about the capricious and arbitrary behavior of these law enforcement agencies in demanding unnecessary documentation as a precondition of processing an application.

Over thirty years ago, I myself submitted an application in a town where the police were not known to be fond of issuing permits. Months dragged on with no status updates, until eventually I moved to another town and submitted a new application. Soon afterward, I was invited to come in and meet the police chief for a "suitability" interview; fortunately that meeting went well, or else I might still be waiting. Of course, not everybody has the option of changing residence to produce a more favorable outcome. Some years later, my wife applied for her permit, and the first selectman happened to be a good friend of ours. Obviously, not everyone is so fortunate.

It is this "suitability" requirement that makes the BFPE so important. If Connecticut were a true "Shall Issue" state like 40 others, we could get by without the Board. Until such time as we pass a Shall Issue law, we are dependent on the due process provided by the BFPE when discretionary actions by local authorities violate law-abiding citizens' rights.

Thank you for your consideration.

Michael J. Butler