

Testimony of Barbara Henry
Public Safety and Security Committee of the CT General Assembly
February 10, 2011
H.B. 5800 - An Act Requiring Registration of all Firearms

Good morning Senator Hartley, Rep. Dargan and members of the Committee. My name is Barbara Henry, First Selectman from the Town of Roxbury. I am not here today in that capacity, I am here as a citizen, an NRA member and one who owns a registered hand gun with a permit to carry.

I'm here to express my opposition of H.B. 5800, An Act Requiring Registration of all Firearms.

And what I'd like to hear from you when I'm finished is what is your objective with this legislation? What exactly are you trying to accomplish? What is your stated goal?

I am currently the President of the CT Council of Small Towns and serve on the BOD for the CT Conference of Municipalities. I am not suggesting I represent those groups here today. But I must say that over the years we have had countless discussions on matters concerning our towns and cities and never have I heard from our members, "We really need to get the shotguns and rifles registered in our communities." It has never made the list of our legislative priorities. This is not a pressing issue.

The problem with government is that it is becoming more and more reactive than proactive. For example, if your intentions are to reduce crimes like robberies or home invasions and you made owning a weapon mandatory, this would very likely work towards that stated goal. But to have every law-abiding, gun-owning, Connecticut resident go through the process of registering their shotguns and rifles, and again every 5 years, what purpose is it serving? Do you think the criminals will register their guns? They're not registering their hand guns now and it's the law.

You cannot legislate people's behavior. What happened in Tuscon, AZ, is a perfect example. Are we going to make the entire law-abiding population of gun owners register their long guns with the expectation that this will prevent these types of horrific acts of violence? I don't see it. I reference a case here in CT of my husband's friend who was killed. He was shot in the back, several times, on purpose, by a person who had a registered gun with a permit to carry it. He was unarmed. Registration is not a form of prevention. If that is your goal, you will fail. It is impossible to predict.

The kind of legislation you are proposing, I fear, is the beginning of a ratcheted approach to total gun confiscation. We've seen examples of this in Australia and the UK. All residents were required by law to turn in all personal firearms. The goal was to dramatically reduce crime in those countries but it had the exact opposite effect. Crime rose exponentially. It's happened in Latin America - countries were overthrown where it was illegal to own a firearm.

In addition, such legislation will require a mountain of paperwork and untold time to enforce and comply, which translates into adding government jobs and increasing the operating costs to a State that bonded some of its operating costs last year. We should be looking at ways to reduce the size of government not growing it. Government is not a producer, it is a consumer and it is big enough already.

Your proposed legislative initiative is not a problem-solving effort. We hear that on a percentage basis, CT has a per capita debt obligation which is the highest in the nation. You should avail yourselves of every working moment to do something to address what is a real and threatening problem to all CT residents, not what appears to be this agenda-driven legislation.

I want to thank you for your time here today and for giving me the opportunity to speak.