



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

REPRESENTATIVE TONI E. WALKER
93rd ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING ROOM 2700
HARTFORD, CT 06106-1591

CAPITOL: 860-240-8585
TOLL FREE: 800-842-8267
FAX: 860-240-0027
E-MAIL: Toni.Walker@cga.ct.gov

CHAIRMAN
APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MEMBER
HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT
ADVANCEMENT COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

February 10, 2011

To: Public Safety and Security Committee

Re: House Bill 5800, An Act Requiring Registration of All Firearms

Good morning, Chairs Hartley and Dargan and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. I am Representative Toni Walker and I am submitting written testimony in support of House Bill 5800, An Act Requiring Registration of All Firearms.

I represent the 93rd House Assembly District in New Haven, a community which is directly afflicted by the perils of gun violence and youth gun violence. This legislation is of particular concern to me and my constituents.

To begin, I must note that there are many wonderful things which happen in the City of New Haven every day. Our city has many strong and vibrant neighborhoods that are filled with parents who work hard to support their families, and kids who strive to do well in school. Sadly, like many communities across Connecticut, children in New Haven are getting their hands on guns. The fact is, when youth are able to easily access guns, the severity of violence increases. Today, we as a legislature have the power to lessen the gun violence which is taking place statewide. We have the power to save lives and decrease senseless violence.

That is why I join my colleagues, Senator Toni Harp and Representative Gary Holder-Winfield, in introducing House Bill 5800. This legislation will significantly decrease the amount of firearms which are illegally acquired each year, and thereby decrease the number of guns being procured by youth throughout the state. The intent of this bill is to reduce violence among youth in an urban setting. We would rather address the violence by requiring people to register guns than address the totalities of gun violence and gun-related arrests in juvenile court.

At this critical juncture, we must strive to enact stringent legislation that requires gun owners to register their firearms within ten days of acquisition and to respond accordingly in the event that their firearm being lost or stolen. More rigorous laws will mandate accountability amongst gun owners and ensure that they will be held responsible if their guns make it into the hands of youth.

In this time of fiscal accountability, it is also important to point out that enacting gun registration legislation will bring revenue into the state. Conversely, if we fail to address the ease of access to firearms, we will continue to incur costs for those treated in the emergency rooms of hospitals as a result of gun violence and also the costs related to prosecuting gun violence crimes in juvenile courts. Our tax payers' dollars would be better spent on comprehensive programming and services for youth and families.

I call on Governor Dannel Malloy to form a task force focused on urban youth violence as a first step in a process to end the violence. In order to address the volatility of youth violence, we must first expand our understanding of it and its consequences; and work towards providing solvent evidenced-based solutions.

As a state, we must move towards enacting gun legislation which protects our families, supports our communities and lessens the amount of youth gun violence. I believe that more stringent gun legislation is a step towards ensuring that reality.