

Testimony In Opposition to Governor's Bill 1017, Sec. 36. Subsection (a) of section 29-32b

My name is Stephanie Cypher residing in Plymouth, Executive Member of the Connecticut Citizens Defense League and I am testifying in opposition to Governor's Bill 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. Governor's Bill 1017, Section 36, Subsection (a) would have an immeasurable impact on Connecticut's law-abiding gun owners by transferring operations of the Board of Firearm Permit Examiners to the Department of Public Safety. If approved, an applicant who is denied a pistol permit would have to appeal to the very body, the DPS, which rejected the permit. The removal of this currently independent board will make it harder for law-abiding gun owners to regain their pistol permits if they have been revoked or denied without proper cause. Many issuing authorities in Connecticut have for years taken it upon themselves to ask for "EXTRA" information from applicants applying for their permit to carry pistols and revolvers. These intrusive bits of extra information include things such as 3 letters of recommendation that may need to be notarized, signed forms allowing the issuing authority to do financial credit checks, and some even request applicants to sign waivers so authorities can check your medical/mental health history records. This extra information has never been required by any state statute. On January 14, 2010 the BFPE issued a Declaratory Ruling that anything not specifically called out in the CT state statues is NOT necessary when applying for a permit. What would the DPS do?

At this time there are a number of cities and towns that are telling applicants for Connecticut Permits to Carry Pistols and Revolvers that the process is taking longer than 8 weeks. Some local issuing authorities are going so far as to say applications for these permits are only available during certain hours. It is important to be aware of the time frames mandated by law and to hold local issuing authorities accountable to this law. What would the DPS do?

The main reason Governor's Bill 1017 is being proposed is to aid in reducing Connecticut's state budget. In order for the DPS to properly support the work of the BFPE, the DPS will need to hire additional staff for which no funding is provided. The projected savings associated with this provision are clearly overstated. In addition, the Bill stipulates that, with the exception of public members, the members shall be appointed from nominees of the Commissioner of Public Safety and the Connecticut State Association of Chiefs of Police, among other organizations and each of said organizations shall be entitled to representation on the board. Isn't that a little like putting the fox in charge of the hen house? When the rubber meets the road, will the DPS stand up for the people of Connecticut or for its own agents?

Many people applying for their permit are not aware of what is deemed necessary by the State of Connecticut. Some have supplied the extra information and waited the extended time to get their permit, unaware that their own town's authority is breaking the law; others have considered it an invasion of their privacy and decided against applying for their permit on principle, thus compromising their Second Amendment rights. I hope I've stated a good case for you today, but Section 36, Subsection (a) from Governor's Bill 1017 should be removed on those grounds alone. Thank you for your time.