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**In Opposition to HB 5800,
"AN ACT REQUIRING REGISTRATION OF ALL FIREARMS,"**

It is my purpose here to express my unequivocal opposition to HB 5800, "AN ACT REQUIRING REGISTRATION OF ALL FIREARMS," which I consider harmful and onerous to law-abiding citizens.

In cities, states and countries where either partial or total gun bans have been enacted, they have usually been preceded by firearm registration. This includes in nominally democratic countries like the UK, Australia, and Canada; and in many non-democratic regimes such as Ottoman Turkey, the Soviet Union under Stalin, Nazi Germany, China under Mao, Guatemala, Uganda, and Cambodia, with disastrous results.

The only purpose served by registering legally owned firearms is to inform the authorities of whose door to knock on when they decide to ban whole classes of firearms. Canada has required the registration of all handguns since 1934. It has never once been used to solve a crime, but Canadian officials later used the registration list to round up numerous types of guns that were made illegal afterwards. The State of California used lists obtained under the mandatory registration of so-called "assault weapons" to force its citizens to divest themselves of any firearms that fit that arbitrary description. Criminals obviously will not register their weapons; in fact, the Supreme Court has ruled that asking them to do so violates their 5th Amendment right against self-incrimination!

Compliance will be an issue; many countries with across-the-board registration laws have experienced high percentage of non-compliance by otherwise law-abiding citizens: The Federal Republic of Germany has mandatory registration of all firearms, but it is estimated that only 20% of gun owners have complied. The City of Boston has roughly 1% compliance with its "assault weapon" registration requirement; the City of Cleveland also about 1%. The state of California had about 10% before it decided just to ban them instead. We can expect a certain amount of civil disobedience by people who object to such a law, such as Canada has experienced, with several hundred thousand people openly flouting it. The burden on enforcement alone will divert valuable police resources from crime fighting to making criminals out of common citizens.

It is well known that the state budget is in dire straits; a program like this would be like pouring gasoline on a fire. Using the example of Canada again, the registry was supposed to cost a net of \$2 million CDN after fees were collected. To date, the registry has cost over \$1 billion and counting. A computer crash has compromised the integrity of the system as well. Even if the state budget had a surplus, a program like this would be fiscally risky.

This is not gun control. This is state control of the people.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Butler