

Chairpersons and Members of the Committee:

I am submitting testimony to indicate my **FULL SUPPORT** for the following bills:

S.B. No. 196 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECORDING OF PISTOL AND REVOLVER SALES IN A BOUND BOOK.

H.B. No. 5096 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE FIREARMS EVIDENCE DATABANK.

H.B. No. 5245 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR A TEMPORARY STATE PERMIT TO CARRY A PISTOL OR REVOLVER.

H.B. No. 5246 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE PERMIT TO SELL PISTOLS OR REVOLVERS

With reference to HB 5245, I suggest that it be amended to include an enforcement provision. This bill in part alters an existing statute to standardize the application across the state. Issuing authorities have already been asked by the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners not to add to or alter the existing application, yet many departments have not complied. Clearly this statute is needed to require them to. However, both the existing statute and the proposed statute require the issuing authority to render a decision and notify the applicant within 8 weeks. I am a pistol instructor who teaches the NRA Basic Pistol Class, and my students routinely follow up with me on the status of their permits. This statutory requirement is routinely ignored by local police, who violate both the letter and the spirit of the law with impunity. One example is my home town of Stratford. In Stratford, you have to make an appointment to get your fingerprints taken. It takes 3-4 months to get an appointment. After the appointment it takes an additional 16 weeks to have a decision on the application. I have a student who applied in Stamford in July 2011. He was approved in January 2012. Westport is telling applicants 6 months. They are blaming a backlog at the State Police Bureau of Identification. The Board of Firearms Permit Examiners currently has a 10-month calendar for appeals. Many of these appeals are due to delays, and are never heard, because the permit is issued prior to the hearing date. What I find interesting contrast to all of this is that Bridgeport, one of the largest departments in the state with one of the heaviest workloads is able to turn these applications around in 6 weeks. Even with the delay by the state they are taking 10-12, but the applications are processed and investigated before the results from the state come back, and as soon as they come back clean, the application is approved. If they can do it, why can't others?

The answer to that question is quite simple. Some issuing authorities don't WANT to issue pistol permits. If this bill is passed, and a police department chooses to ignore it, what will happen? We need to codify that in law. I recommend financial sanctions for every delayed application, whether approved or not, and for every denied application that is overturned on appeal. All fees collected by both the police and DPS should be forfeited specifically to fund the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners to fund their

operations. The right of every citizen to keep and bear arms in defense of themselves or the state is codified in our state Constitution. Can you imagine if a police department made a criminal defendant wait 4 months to see an attorney and another 4 months for an arraignment while they sit in jail? That would spark outrage. The right to bear arms is no less important than the right to a fair and speedy trial.

Once again I strongly support this bill, and I hope this committee will find it prudent to add an enforcement provision to this bill, and to pass it.

Respectfully,
John Sturmer