



State of Connecticut
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Testimony of State Representative William Tong
House Bill 5561 An Act Concerning Funding For the State-Wide Firearms Trafficking Task Force

Senator Harp, Representative Walker, distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, I am State Representative William Tong and I'm here to testify on House Bill 5561 AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR THE STATE-WIDE FIREARMS TRAFFICKING TASK FORCE.

In 2007 I was proud to lead passage of Public Act 07-163, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REPORTING OF LOST OR STOLEN FIREARMS AND ILLEGAL FIREARMS TRAFFICKING. This act established the crime of firearm trafficking and required gun owners to report if their firearm is lost or stolen within 72 hours after he or she discovered or should have discovered it missing. This law closed a loophole which allowed people to claim a gun was lost or stolen, when in fact they had sold it to a person who is prohibited by law from owning or acquiring a gun.

One of the key mechanisms of enforcement of these new rules is the Firearms Trafficking Task Force. Over the last three fiscal years the budget for the Statewide Firearms Trafficking Taskforce has been cut nearly in half, from \$486,946.25 in FY 2010 to \$248,715.18 in FY 2012. While the task force had a staff of eleven in 2008, the task force only had one State Police Detective assigned to it in FY 2012. We need to reverse this trend and that is why I proposed House Bill 5561.

In Connecticut and throughout the country, far too many people die every year from gun violence. The Trafficking Taskforce is a great resource for cracking down on illegal guns, guns that are likely to be used in the commission of a crime or to commit murder. Fully funding this task force will save lives and make our state a safer place to live.

Thank you for considering this important legislation.