

# DISABLED AMERICANS FOR FIREARMS RIGHTS

March 19, 2013

Members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to everyone's testimony at this public hearing today. I know that it can get extremely busy and again, I appreciate your time.

My name is Scott Ennis and I am from New London, CT. I am also the founder of Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights. As of March 11, 2013 we have a national membership of 15,106 individuals of which 2,614 members reside in the State of Connecticut. Members of our organization have expressed serious concern regarding HB-6656, an act concerning liability insurance for firearm possessors or owners.

My Great Uncle, Rene Gagnon, United States Marine, was one of the flag raisers at the Battle of Iwo Jima during WWII. He along with thousands of others risked their lives for freedom. He would be heartbroken at the very idea of this bill even being proposed. We have an inalienable right to self-defense. That inalienable right is protected by both the Second Amendment and the Connecticut Constitution. This god given right is not contingent upon if an individual has ability to purchase liability insurance.

In the case of Warren v. District of Columbia the courts have already ruled that the government, be it federal, state or local, has held that "police do not have a duty to provide police services to individuals, even if a dispatcher promises help to be on the way." This means that the protection of your own life is ultimately in your own hands. This is nothing against the police, many of my family members are police officers for municipalities and also on the state and federal levels. This simply means the police cannot be everywhere protecting everyone. Especially with public safety services facing serious budget cuts.

HB-6656 causes an unjust and unconstitutional financial burden on the disabled, minorities, elderly, the disadvantaged, as well as all Connecticut families. This comes at a time in our country where many are unemployed or under employed. With thousands of families living on fixed incomes and already facing serious financial strain, adding to them another financial burden so that they can exercise their right to protect themselves and their families is extremely discriminatory.

This bill will do nothing to stop gun violence within the State of Connecticut. This bill will cause an unjust financial burden on thousands of disabled residents wanting to protect themselves by the ability of their Second Amendment Right. If HB-6656 were to be passed the law abiding, tax paying and voting Connecticut residents I mentioned earlier will not be able to exercise that right. The disabled as well as every Connecticut resident should not be punished by the actions of one severely mentally disturbed individual criminal.

Scott Ennis  
Founder  
Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights

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**FIREARM RESTRICTIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON  
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES**

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## FIREARM RESTRICTIONS AND THEIR EFFECT ON PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

March 8, 2013

Tens of thousands of responsible disabled firearm owners can only use an adaptable rifle platform such as the AR15 modern sporting and defense rifle. This is the exact same modern sporting and defense rifle that many gun control advocates are attempting to ban or seriously restrict.

The AR15 modern sporting and defense rifle is a semi-automatic rifle. Not a machine gun, not an automatic assault weapon. The rifle's semi-automatic function allows the individual to fire only one round every time they pull the trigger. The rifle does not fire multiple rounds when the trigger is pulled. This semi-automatic functioning also allows a person with a disability to be able to fire the rifle without having to manually cycle a round into the chamber, such as with a standard bolt action rifle. Many disabled firearm owners can only fire a semi-automatic type firearm. There is no operational difference at all from the AR15 type rifle than any other semi-automatic rifle. The only differences are in the rifle having adaptability features. By adaptability features I mean, it allows the person to adjust the rifle around their own bodily limitations. The rifle allows an individual to add a collapsible stock. This gives the person the ability to shorten the stock just enough so they can comfortably and safely hold the rifle. The AR15 type rifle platform also has a pistol grip as well as the added ability to allow an individual to add a forward grip. These three options are why individuals with disorders and disabilities such as, multiple sclerosis, arthritis, different forms of paralysis, connective tissue diseases, amputees, hemophilia and a plethora of other disabilities use the AR15 type rifle platform. For thousands of individuals with disabilities they can only use this platform. There is simply no other platform available. I will add that if there was another adaptable platform available, that platform would also fall under the exact same proposed ban or restriction rulings as the AR15 platform. This would happen simply because of the reasons specifically outlined as being the "assault weapon characteristics" which are the functional options the disabled individual must have. To limit the options to two or even one "assault weapon characteristic" also has a drastically negative effect on disabled firearm owners. While adding one option of say the pistol grip may be all that one disabled individual may need, thousands of disabled individuals need to use two or three. It will depend on their individual disability. I also add that the pistol grip should not be considered towards the "assault weapon characteristic" number since all AR15 type rifles have a pistol grip.

The adjustable and adaptable options that I am speaking of have nothing to do with the lethality of the firearm. But, those adaptable options have everything to do with allowing the tens of thousands of responsible disabled Americans to be able to exercise their Second Amendment Right. Why should we as disabled Americans not be able or allowed to exercise that right? Are we second rate citizens? I don't think so! We deserve a voice and we deserve to exercise our Second Amendment Right. We are American citizens just like you. Do not leave us out of the gun control debate and do not forget about us!

Scott Ennis

*Hemophiliac with severe joint damage and founder of Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights*

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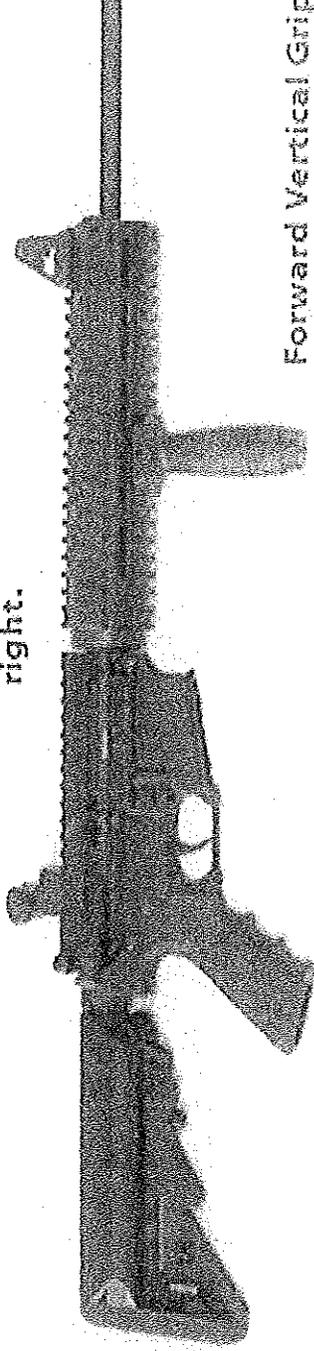
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#### **Collapsible Stock:**

Allows person with impairment to adjust the length of the rifle to their individual unique needs. Many disabled individuals do not have full extension of their arms. A collapsible stock adjusts to the limitation of extension.

Thousands of disabled firearm owners can only use this adaptable rifle platform. It allows them to adapt the rifle around their disability. These features have nothing to do with the lethality of the rifle, but have everything to do with allowing disabled firearm owners the ability to exercise their right.



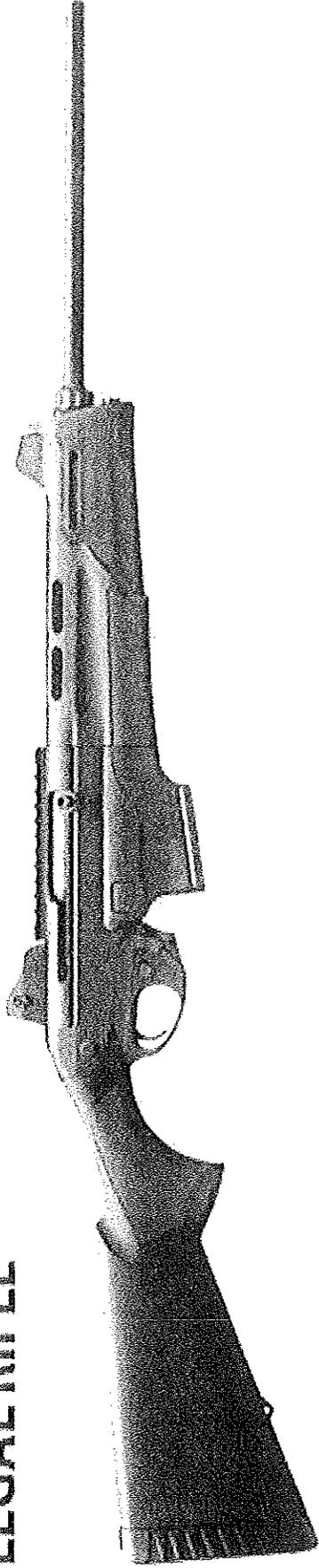
#### **Pistol Grip:**

Allows person with impairment to safely and comfortably hold rifle with their wrist in the neutral position. Many disabled individuals can only hold a rifle that has a pistol type grip.

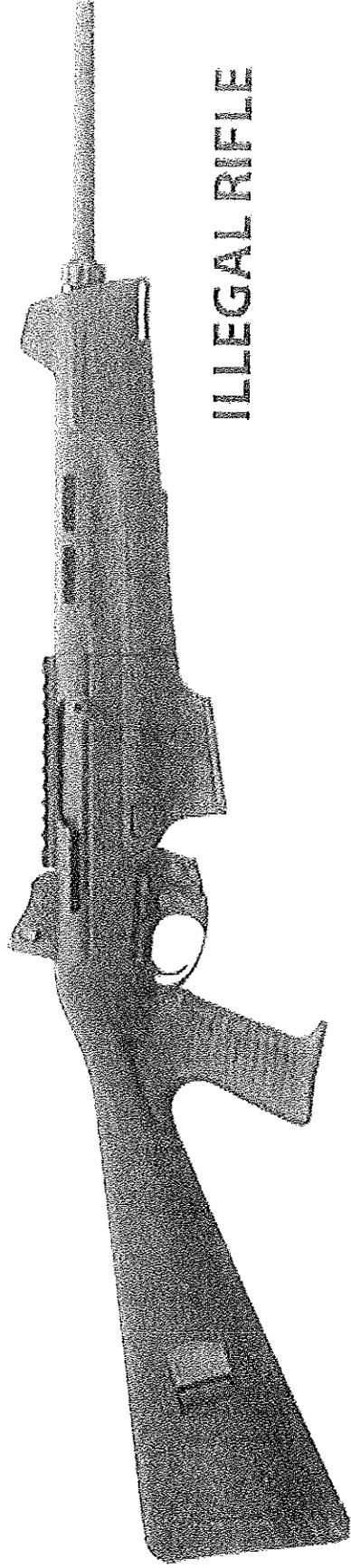
#### **Forward Vertical Grip:**

Allows person with impairment to safely hold the rifle with their palm in the neutral position. Many disabled individuals have limited rotation of their arm. The forward vertical grip allows them to hold the rifle without rotating the arm past the neutral position.

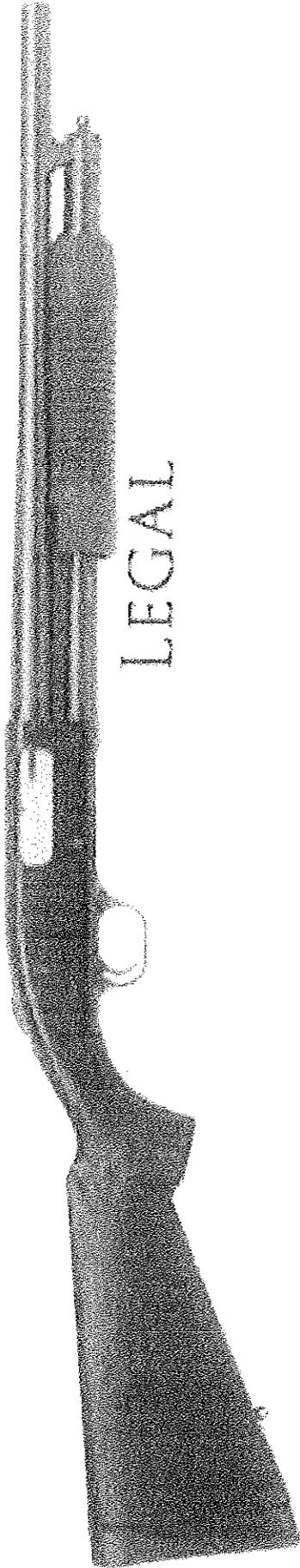
## LEGAL RIFLE



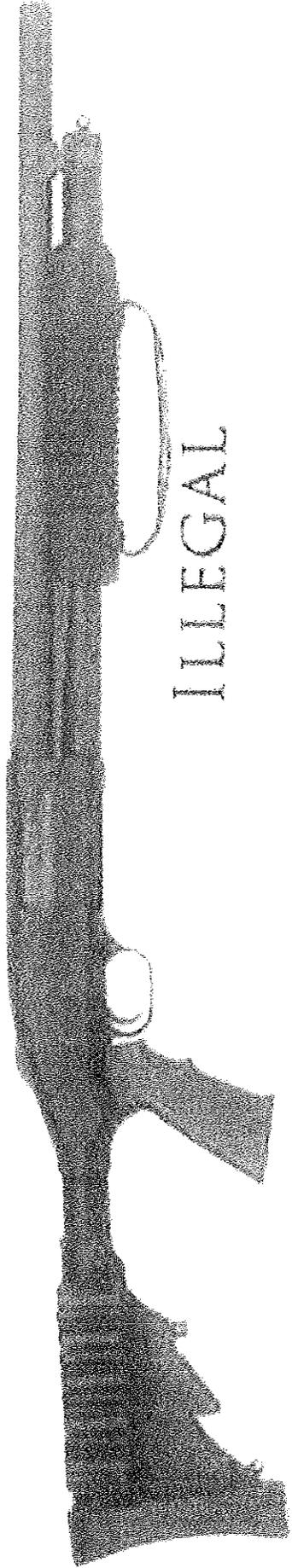
## ILLEGAL RIFLE



THIS IS THE EXACT SAME FIREARM. ADJUSTABLE FEATURES THAT ARE ADDED TO THE BOTTOM RIFLE MAKE IT ILLEGAL. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN FIRING OR MECHANICAL FUNCTION. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN LETHALITY. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THE BOTTOM RIFLE ALLOWS A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY TO ADJUST THE RIFLE AROUND THEIR IMPAIRMENT.



LEGAL



ILLEGAL

THIS IS THE EXACT SAME FIREARM. ADJUSTABLE FEATURES THAT ARE ADDED TO THE BOTTOM SHOTGUN MAKE IT ILLEGAL. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN FIRING OR MECHANICAL FUNCTION. THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE IN LETHALITY. THE ONLY DIFFERENCE IS THE BOTTOM ONE ALLOWS A PERSON WITH A DISABILITY TO ADJUST THE SHOTGUN AROUND THEIR IMPAIRMENT.



## Mission of Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights:

Proudly Representing Responsible Disabled Firearms Owners!

DAFR fights for the inalienable firearms rights of responsible disabled Americans. Disabled Americans have unique needs when exercising their 2nd Amendment rights. The mission of DAFR is intertwined within five basic areas of focus.

These areas consist of:

1. *The introduction of firearms for self-defense to disabled Americans.*
2. *Shooting sports program and organized competition for disabled Americans and wounded veterans.*
3. *Oversee firearms legislation and research their impact on Americans with disabilities.*
4. *Offer assistance to responsible disabled Americans in order to exercise their 2nd Amendment right.*
5. *Educating the public and elected officials about how disabled American firearms owners have unique needs that must be met when exercising their 2nd Amendment right.*

We have also become concerned with recent legislation that is proposed throughout the United States in reaction to the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut. With that, our organization has taken a clear stand on various bills, public acts and proposed laws that we deem would be disadvantageous to responsible disabled firearms owners. DAFR intends to shed light on the fact that many Disabled Americans can only use certain types of firearms such as the highly adaptable AR15 rifle platform. A ban or other serious restrictions on the AR15 rifle as well as certain other firearms will have an adverse effect on the rights of thousands of disabled Americans.

### **Recent Testimony by Scott Ennis at the State of Connecticut Gun Violence Task Force hearings on January 28, 2013:**

"My name is Scott Ennis; I am from New London, CT. I am also the Founder of Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights. As of January 27th, 2013 we have an approximate national membership of 14,350 individuals of which approximately 1,134 members currently reside in the State of Connecticut. Members of our organization have expressed serious concern regarding the number of anti-firearms bills that are being introduced.

We are highly concerned regarding the mislabeling of certain semi-automatic rifles as being assault weapons and their possible ban. Many responsible disabled firearms owners can only utilize the AR-15 type rifle as it is easily adjustable for each individual's own special needs. As one of the founders of DAFR, I can attest to this first hand. I have a bleeding disorder called Hemophilia. Hemophilia causes internal bleeding into the joints which over time severely hinders normal joint function. 40 years of bleeding into my joints, particularly the elbows have rendered me unable to completely straighten my arms as well as the inability to turn my hand over to grip the forend of a rifle or shotgun in a traditional manner. I currently use an AR-15 type rifle for both home defense as well as for sport shooting. The pistol grip, adjustable stock and addition of a vertical foregrip allow individuals with certain disabilities, such as myself, to be able to adjust the firearm to their own specific need as well as the ability to hold their hands in a vertical position. Without these types of options, thousands of responsible disabled firearms owners would not be able to exercise their 2nd Amendment rights.

Our members do respect and praise the establishing of this bipartisan task force to investigate the tragic events that happened in Sandy Hook and how future tragedies like that can be avoided. With that being said we are also concerned that the task force may be used as a vehicle to push many of the bills that are being proposed straight to the floor for a vote. Use of an Emergency Certification procedure on any of the current proposals will not give an opportunity for our members to testify in opposition to what we deem would be unfair to many responsible disabled firearms owners.

The rights of responsible disabled firearms owners as well as all responsible firearms owners within the State of Connecticut should take precedent over any such unfair proposals or extreme reactions based on the actions of one severely disturbed individual criminal." - **Scott Ennis, Hemophiliac & Founder of DAFR**

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