

Thursday, March 14, 2013

Public Safety and Security Committee

S.B. No. 505 An Act Concerning the Minimum age to purchase a Rifle or Other Long Gun.

A **privilege** is a special permission, immunity or benefit granted by another authority on a conditional basis. It can be revoked or modified by that same authority in certain circumstances. By contrast, a **right** is an inherent, irrevocable entitlement held by all citizens or all human beings from the moment of birth. A drivers license is a **privilege** granted by CT Statute. As my Senator, you have the **privilege** of serving as a lawmaker granted by my vote. Gun ownership is a '**Constitutional Right**', entitled by the mere fact that I am a US citizen and a Connecticut resident.

CONSTITUTION OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT:

ARTICLE FIRST. DECLARATION OF RIGHTS:

SEC. 15. *Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state.*

UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION: SECOND AMENDMENT: *A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed.* (and as ruled by the Supreme Court in *District of Columbia v. Heller*², confirmed that the rights of the Second Amendment adhere to individuals ... and extend beyond the context of militia service to include self-defense.)

I am opposed to S.B. No. 505: An Act Concerning the Minimum age to Purchase a Rifle or Other Long Gun.

Connecticut has a long tradition of supporting hunting and recreational shooting by our youth. We provide 'Hunters Safety Courses'. We grant 'supervised' hunting privileges to those 12 to 15 years of age. We grant un-restricted hunting privileges to those 16 years of age or older. I can tell you emphatically, that there is nothing more rewarding than the sense of joy, privilege and responsibility that comes from getting your first firearm for hunting. "Your own gun". Many recreational sporting organizations recognize these same guidelines in sponsoring shooting activities for our youth. A prime example of this is the Eastern Connecticut Skeet League, a Winter Skeet League comprised of 14 Eastern Connecticut Clubs, with around 50 teams and 350 participants. (ecsc-skeet.com). Sprague Rod and Gun Club is a sponsoring club in this league.

Eighteen year olds are accepted for military duties. They are trained in the handling of firearms and combat techniques. Eighteen years olds are seen as reaching the 'age of majority' with regard to voting.

I see no valid reason to interject an arbitrary 'age restriction' for the retail purchase of a Rifle or other Long Gun. If such an onerous provision is mandated, you **MUST** use an age restriction of no more than eighteen (18). One might even argue that if the age of eighteen (18) is the recognized "age of majority", it would be unconstitutional to deny ownership of a rifle or Other Long Gun to an eighteen (18) year old.

I urge you to recognize these observations and **REJECT** the proposed Committee Bill NO. S.B. 505.

Thank you.

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