

Testimony for Public Hearing on Various Gun Control proposals

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My name is Edward Seder. I moved to Ridgefield, Connecticut in 1966 at the age of 12 and was a gun owner at the time. I moved into my current house in Danbury in 1988 and continue to be a gun owner.

I am disappointed that more is not being done to address the cause of the violence that these proposed laws are supposed to be addressing. There is nothing in any of these proposals, with the possible exception of improving background checks, that will keep guns out of the hands of criminals. There is also nothing here that addresses the moral depravity that leads to violence like we saw in Sandy Hook. I know there are studies that say violence in games, movies and books do not cause violence in our children. In the general population I am sure that is true. I don't believe it is true for some individuals and what we are trying to prevent is violence by a very small number of individuals. Much more targeted research needs to be done.

I do believe that there are people in our society that for various reasons want to see all guns banned. Those individuals are taking advantage of the emotions generated by the Sandy Hook tragedy to further their goals. The governor said he chose to release his own proposal for fear that the Legislature would not take advantage of the momentum created by the Sandy Hook shooting in December. The actual quote is "Despite the strong leadership and goodwill in Connecticut's House and Senate, we run a risk of letting this critical moment in history pass us by". If you have to take advantage of emotion to pass legislation, that legislation must not be justifiable simply by facts. There is no evidence that any of the proposals that limit capacity or what a gun can look like will save any lives.

There are people who are pushing for what they call common sense gun laws. Common sense is often wrong. Common sense does not rely on facts but rather on someone's thought process about how things ought to work. Please don't pass common sense laws. Please stick to facts.

Facts are something in short supply. We still do not know the detail of what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary. There is a big rush to pass legislation to prevent a similar occurrence and we still don't know the detail of what happened. The only reason I can think of to delay the release of facts in this case is to help pass legislation based on emotion and not fact.

My specific concerns with the proposed legislation being discussed today follows. In general, this legislation is aimed at limiting or stopping the law abiding legitimate gun owner from being able to freely exercise his second amendment rights. This legislation will do nothing to deter criminals.

I know the following is lengthy but so is the proposed legislation.

Raised Bill No. 1076 AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF GUN VIOLENCE

Please vote against this bill for the following reasons.

Section 1 (5) defines an assault weapon and any gun that has one of the features in the list. None of these features make the gun an assault weapon. Some are simply aids for aiming and therefore make the gun less dangerous since the person firing the weapon is more likely to hit what he is shooting at and not someone or something else nearby. This legislation is obviously not thought out. The item (ii) A second handgrip would not be possible since the first handgrip would be banned. This was apparently just lifted from current law and it has not been considered if any of these restrictions will help.

Section 2 (2) (b) (1) exempts the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, police departments, the Department of Correction or the military or naval forces of this state or of the United States for use in the discharge of their official duties. There is no reason they need more capability than I do. If I am attacked in my home I should have at least as much chance to defend myself as a police officer would if he was there. (Of course a police officer would not be there. He might be on the phone but that would not be the same.)

Section 2 (3) (b) exempts members or employees of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, police departments, the Department of Correction or the military or naval forces of this state or of the United States for use in the discharge of their official duties. There is no reason they need more firepower than I do. If these weapons are banned for me they need to be banned for them too. There are plenty of incidents of weapons being stolen from the police so they should not be trusted either.

Section 6 (a) Requiring a permit to purchase or own a rifle is redundant with the background checks already in place and will do nothing to keep weapons out of the hands of criminals.

Section 6 (c) Limits the purchases of firearms to 1 every 30 days except for law enforcement. Limiting the number of firearms I can purchase seriously infringes on my right to take advantage of sales or other opportunities that may not be available after waiting 30 days. Often if you see a gun you want, you need to buy it then or it will be gone. Nobody should be limited by this rule but if the rule is passed it should apply to everyone including law enforcement. It is no more hardship for them than it would be for me.

Section 7,8,9,10,11,12,13,and 14 Requiring a rifle permit is redundant with a background check and is not necessary. In addition there is no reason a 12 or 13 year old should not own a rifle or shotgun (used under adult supervision of course). This ownership teaches responsible gun use and care. There is a long tradition in this country of young people owning guns and using them in competitions or for hunting. We should not discourage this tradition when there is no evidence that this will keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Charging people to exercise their second amendment rights is an infringement on those rights. This creates a hardship for law abiding gun owners and does nothing else.

Section 22 (f) does not specify the timeframe for the national criminal history records check. Permit renewals could be held up indefinitely if the checks are either not submitted or not submitted in a timely manner. The commissioner must be required to perform the checks before the renewal date of the permit or there could be delays that the applicant can do nothing to resolve. This section must spell out the commissioner's responsibilities to ensure the permit can be renewed without interruption of the applicant's right to carry or use his or her guns.

Section 25 requiring in person transfer of body armor makes no sense. Possession as defined in section 24 should be adequate.

Section 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30 Gun offence registry. This is redundant with criminal background checks. Requiring someone to constantly update the police when they move and being treated similar to sex offenders when the infraction may not have posed a hazard to anyone does not seem to be the right thing for our society. If a person unknowingly discharges a firearm within 500 feet of a dwelling while hunting, and nobody was hurt, should that follow them the rest of their lives? There is just too much chance to unfairly register a person on this list. If the list is limited to only offences where someone was hurt (not accidentally) or directly threatened (e.g. robbed at gunpoint), then perhaps this would be OK although still does not serve any purpose a background check does not already do.

Sections 31-43 Registration of firearms. There is no reason to register firearms except to facilitate later confiscation of those firearms. Registration will not aid law enforcement in solving any crime. This is intended only to create hardship for legal law abiding gun owners and to set the stage for confiscation (as was done in Germany prior to World War 2). There are so many things wrong with this section including the restrictions on ammunition that it would effectively make it impossible for me to legally use my guns.

Section 33 Would prohibit possession of ammunition I already own. I sometimes use friends guns so keep ammunition for those guns. My possession of this ammunition does not threaten anyone in any way. This section is only aimed at legal law abiding gun owners and will do nothing to stop criminals from obtaining ammunition.

Section 34 exempts law enforcement from this requirement. They do not have different needs than I do so should not be exempt from any provisions of any laws.

Section 40 provides for the confiscation of firearms. Simply unacceptable. Arbitrary decisions by anyone and the gun is confiscated. By the time a law suit could be filed the firearm would probably be gone. In any case it would not be properly cared for when out of the owner's possession.

Section 41 annual renewal of registration is simply to make this more expensive and difficult for legal law abiding gun owners. There is no benefit to registration and to have to do it every year just as useless.

SB 505 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MINIMUM AGE TO PURCHASE A RIFLE OR OTHER LONG GUN.

This bill will do nothing to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. Even Adam Lanza stole the guns he used. **Please vote against this bill**

Committee Bill No. 506 AN ACT REQUIRING CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR ALL PRIVATE FIREARM SALES

This needs to be clear and easy to perform. There is not enough information in the bill for the average person to be able to comply. Requiring the retention for 20 years is impractical. The records of private sales should be maintained by the state from the information that is sent at the time of the sale. There is no provision for the sale from a private individual to a licensed gun dealer. This needs to be defined. **Please fix then vote for this bill.**

Raised Bill No. 1071 AN ACT CONCERNING ADDITIONAL FUNDING FOR THE CRIMINAL INJURIES COMPENSATION FUND

Legal gun owners do not cause the injuries so should not be penalized for the acts of criminals. This bill puts all of the financial responsibility on legal gun owners and not the criminals who cause injuries. There is no logical reason to do this other than to drive business out of the state and to make exercising second amendment rights expensive. It will do nothing to prevent crime or make criminals pay for what they have done. **Please vote against this bill**

Committee Bill No. 6162 AN ACT CONCERNING INELIGIBILITY FOR A PERMIT TO CARRY A PISTOL OR REVOLVER OR AN ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATE BASED ON A PRIOR HOSPITALIZATION

Eligibility for a permit to carry should be based on the individual and not the other people in the house. This bill would make people who need help less likely to seek help. There are already plenty of incentives to not seek help. Please don't add another. **Please vote against this bill**

Committee Bill No. 6251 AN ACT REQUIRING FINGERPRINTING AND CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECKS PRIOR TO THE SALE, DELIVERY OR TRANSFER OF ALL LONG GUNS

Fingerprinting is an undue hardship for the transfer of a gun. If the background check passes that should be adequate. This bill would do nothing to prevent criminals from obtaining firearms and would not aid investigations of crimes. **Please vote against this bill.**

Raised Bill No. 6595 AN ACT PROHIBITING THE DISCHARGE OF FIREARMS NEAR PRIVATE RESIDENCES

This bill does not provide exception for self-defense when a person's life or limb is in danger. It must not be a crime for us to defend ourselves. **Please vote against this bill.**