



State of Connecticut

African-American Affairs Commission
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue – Room 509
Hartford, CT 06106
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March 14, 2013

Good afternoon members of the Public Safety and Security Committee. My name is Glenn A. Cassis and I am the Executive Director of the African-American Affairs Commission (AAAC). The mission of the Commission is to promote and improve the economic, educational, health, safety and political well-being of the African-American community in Connecticut. I wish to submit testimony in support of **Proposed Bills 505, 506, 6251** and **Raised Bill 6595**.

Before the tragic events of Friday, December 14, 2012 in Newtown, Connecticut, gun violence in the most densely populated communities in the State was a fact of life. For decades gun violence has senselessly torn apart the dreams, lives and aspirations of thousands of denizens in communities around the State. Now that it is apparent that no community can consider itself free from the threat of gun violence, the Commission urges members of the General Assembly to take the necessary steps to dramatically reduce the climate and environment that leads to gun violence throughout Connecticut.

Proposed Bill No. 505, requiring a minimum age of twenty-one years to purchase a rifle is consistent with the requirements to legally purchase a pistol or revolver. The State is consistent with the minimum age to purchase alcoholic beverages regardless of whether it is beer, wine or liquor. Why not do the same for an apparatus that is far more lethal if used inappropriately by a minor?

Our Mission

To improve and promote the economic development, education, health and political well-being of the African-American community in the State of Connecticut

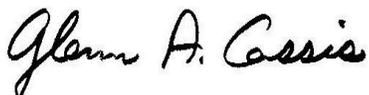
The Commission supports **Proposed Bill No. 506**. The private sale of a firearm to another individual should be regulated. The seller should be required to initiate a background check by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System or a comparable recognized agency. This would help keep firearms out of the hands of criminals.

The passage of **Proposed Bill No. 6251** would assist in keeping long guns out of the hands of individuals with criminal backgrounds. For law-abiding individuals, this inconvenience is minor compared to what could happen if a rifle were acquired by a criminal.

Raised Bill No. 6595 which prohibits the discharge of firearms near private residences makes common sense. It is a violation to discharge explosives (i.e. fireworks and other explosives) in most communities. If passed, this could help eliminate injuries caused by inappropriate use of a firearm. Every year individuals are injured when a stray bullet pierces the walls of a residence.

Making neighborhoods safe from firearms is not an easy task. It will require several steps to develop the necessary safeguards. The African-American Affairs Commission believes that these bills are good common sense steps that should be adopted and passed into law. We appreciate you considering our thoughts and ideas. The AAAC is confident that our communities can, should and will be safe from gun violence. Thank you.

Submitted by,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glenn A. Cassis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Glenn A. Cassis

Executive Director