



PEDRO E. SEGARRA
MAYOR

Testimony by Mayor Pedro E. Segarra & Police Chief James C. Rovella
Various Bills
Assault Weapons Ban, Permitting, Banning High Capacity Magazines, Background Checks
March 14, 2013 at 10:00AM in Hearing Room 2C

Co-Chairs Hartley and Dargan, Vice Chairs Ayala and Verrengia, Ranking Members Guglielmo and Giegler and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety and Security Committee:

We thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on several very important bills before you today. The City of Hartford – your Capital City – has been undergoing a renaissance over the last several years. At the very center of this rebirth are actual reductions in crime and, perhaps more important, improved public perception of safety. Since Chief Rovella's arrival, we have seen dramatic decreases in all major crime areas. This year has been particularly noteworthy as one would need to look back almost 3 decades to see it being so late in the year without a homicide, and shootings are down almost 70%. That said, there is much more to be done on both the micro and macro levels as we all know that the genesis of gun violence in the urban core is far different than that in suburbia.

Rather than comment on each bill specifically, what follows are several principals that we believe must be at the center of the dialogue moving forward, and they are:

1. No one should have access to a weapon that is designed for military use.
2. No one should have access to a weapon that is designed solely to seriously maim or kill.
3. No one should be able to purchase guns of any sort in bulk.
4. No one should have access to a high-capacity magazine (of greater than 10 rounds) and no one should be able to purchase ammunition without having the appropriate permit.
5. No one should be able to purchase or possess a weapon without a confirmed background check and permits should be renewed annually with a possession confirmation requirement.
6. No weapon should exchange hands without being fully documented and approved by state and local officials.
7. We need to institute the strongest minimum mandatory sentences for those who intentionally misuse any firearm – assault weapon, shotgun long rifle or pistol.
8. We need to institute stronger mandatory sentencing that mirrors federal punishments for drug possession, drug sales and drug trafficking.
9. We need to ensure that state officials are sharing all necessary mental health information with the FBI and other federal agencies.
10. To better track and monitor the flow of all firearms, a database needs to be created and protected and made only available to public safety officials.

Doing the above will provide law enforcement professionals and municipal and state leaders with the critical tools to better protect our residents, business owners and visitors. The time for talk is over. Polls have been conducted, studies have been reviewed over and over, conversations have been about what we can and should do. We need to act – and act quickly. Every moment that we delay is another moment where a potential life is in danger. We are all well aware that no amount of legislation will prevent bad people from doing bad things, but morally we are obligated to move with all possible haste to prevent the next violent spree killing or handgun crime.

On behalf of all 125,000 Capital City residents and business owners, we employ you to do what is right, what is appropriate, and to do so now. We thank you for the opportunity to share our thoughts and opinions about what needs to be done and we look forward to working with each of you to make your Capital City – and the State of Connecticut – a much safer place to live, work and play.

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