

NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS FOUNDATION, INC.

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JAKE MCGUIGAN
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RELATIONS/STATE AFFAIRS

March 14, 2013

Public Safety and Security Committee
Legislative Office Building
Room 2C
Hartford, CT 06106

Position: Oppose

Re: Opposition to SB 1076 An Act Concerning the Reduction of Gun Violence

Dear Chairs Hartley and Dargen and Members of the Committee:

We at the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) have been deeply shaken and saddened by the horrible events that took place in Newtown, Connecticut, our headquarters and home. In a small community there are not many degrees of separation and so, not surprisingly, we had family, friends and acquaintances that were affected. Our hearts and prayers go out to the families and the victims of this terrible tragedy.

As the 8,325 member trade association for America's firearms, ammunition, hunting and shooting sports industry, we share the goal of all Americans in wanting to find real and effective solutions that will make our children and communities safer, while at the same time respecting and safeguarding our constitutional rights.

NSSF joins others in calling for a comprehensive approach that addresses many complex social issues, including school safety, preventing unauthorized firearms access, mental health, personal privacy, the popular media, and enforcing our existing laws while safeguarding constitutional rights.

Unfortunately though, SB 1076 is an extremely expansive piece of legislation that does little to impact criminals and will only force law-abiding gun-owners and manufacturers to flee the state. This bill will do nothing to increase public safety and will have astronomical costs to the state to implement these far-reaching policies. In these difficult economic times, the state will be spending millions upon millions of dollars to implement gun control policies that will give Connecticut only the perception that they are tough on crime. This legislation includes rationing of firearms, bans of firearms based on cosmetic appearance, complete registration of firearms, and even confiscation of legally owned firearms for someone who moves to the state, all policies that have proven to be flawed.

NSSF is a resource for much needed technical accuracy in this discussion. It is inaccurate, for example, to state that semiautomatic firearms have no lawful purpose. For well over 100 years, many millions of law-abiding citizens have owned and responsibly used semiautomatic rifles, pistols and shotguns for hunting, target shooting, collecting and personal protection. Semiautomatics are among the most popular hunting rifles, shotguns and target pistols. Currently, millions of law-abiding Americans responsibly own and safely use modern sporting rifles, which may resemble military firearms in appearance but which function

no differently from other types of semiautomatic firearms. Modern sporting rifles are commonly used for hunting, target shooting, home defense and collecting.

One only needs to look as far back as the 1994 "Assault Weapons" Ban to find legislation which did little to increase public safety. One of the sections of this law was halting the production of "high capacity" magazines. This gun control strategy soon proved to be a failure. A comprehensive study by the Centers for Disease Control looked at the full panoply of gun control measures, including this proposed magazine ban, and concluded that none could be proven to reduce crime. Another study, commissioned by Congress, found that bans were not effective since "the banned weapons and magazines were never used in more than a modest fraction of all gun murders." These studies only demonstrate a ban that did not work or increase public safety.

The problem, of course, with such laws is that criminals routinely ignore them (after all, they are criminals). Law-abiding citizens who have every right to purchase and own firearms are the ones who are suffering by eliminating aspects of their activities with this type of law. Many law enforcement individuals are in agreement when questioned on the necessity of more gun control laws. Their sentiments focus on the fact that we currently have enough laws and that these laws just need to be strictly enforced.

While the firearms industry may not agree very often with gun-control advocates, this is one area where both groups see eye to eye. Robert Ricker, the famed gun-control lobbyist and former head of Virginians for Public Safety, in sworn testimony (NAACP v. A.A. Arms, Inc. et al.) stated that one-gun-a-month was a useless law. In his testimony against members of the firearm industry he said, "I think one-gun-a-month is silly. My problem with one-gun-a-month is the fact that just a blanket prohibition just purchasing one is easily circumvented by criminals."

One-gun-a-month laws prohibit law-abiding citizens from purchasing more than one firearm a month, and will hinder lawful commerce in the state, particularly that of small "mom and pop" businesses. Furthermore, according to government studies and statistics, the law does not reduce crime. Some of the many problems associated with one-handgun-a-month laws include:

- According to government studies, including an October 2003 study by the Centers for Disease Control, One-Gun-A-Month has never been proven to reduce crime.
- After implementing One-Gun-A-Month in South Carolina and Virginia and seeing no decrease in violence or the level of gun crime, the state legislatures appropriately repealed the measure.
- Federal firearms dealers must report any and all sales of more than one handgun (including any handgun sold within a five-day period of another handgun) to both ATF and local authorities by close of that business day.
- The federally mandated National Instant Background Check, which everyone must pass before purchasing a firearm from a firearms dealer, is conducted through the National Instant Check System, which searches state and FBI databases to determine whether the purchaser can lawfully buy the firearm.

The one-gun-a-month law is aimed at the wrong group of people and will only control the lawful behavior of Connecticut's citizens, while leaving criminals untouched. This part of the bill is another solution in search of a problem.

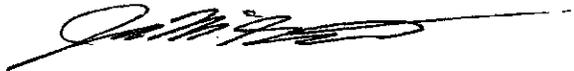
The firearms industry has contributed over \$1.7 billion in economic activity to Connecticut in 2012, employs close to 2,900 people in the state and generates an additional 4,400 jobs in supplier industries. In these difficult economic times, the firearms industry is still one of the few industries that has continued to grow while also contributing increased tax revenues to the state (to the tune of \$119 million).

We are engaged in this dialog based on what we believe and what we are doing regarding the prevention of unauthorized access to firearms, including by minors and mentally disturbed individuals. For example:

- NSSF is expanding its nationally recognized Project ChildSafe gun safety program to further emphasize the necessity of proper storage of firearms in homes where young or at-risk persons reside. NSSF includes appropriate materials on securing firearms in its firearm safety kits that include a gun locking device. Working in partnership with law enforcement agencies, Project ChildSafe has distributed more than 35 million firearm safety kits free of charge to firearm owners nationwide. Fortunately, firearms accidents in all age groups have fallen to a century-long low.
- NSSF is committed to its ongoing cooperation with law enforcement to help prevent firearms from being illegally purchased for criminals and other unauthorized individuals best exemplified by our retailer education and public awareness campaign, "Don't Lie for The Other Guy." In a decade-long partnership with U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF), NSSF has distributed free of charge tens of thousands of educational kits to retailers to help them identify and prevent illegally purchased firearms. Our public service announcements have been seen by tens of millions of Americans in over 30 media markets selected by ATF.
- NSSF matches rewards offered by ATF for information leading to the arrest and conviction of those responsible for thefts of firearms from federally licensed firearms retailers.
- NSSF has advocated for innovative programs, such as sales tax exemptions for firearms security devices, to promote greater safety measures in keeping children and unauthorized persons from accessing firearms. Today, the vast majority of firearms are shipped from their manufacturers with appropriate locking devices.
- NSSF has long supported the 2008 NICS (National Instant Criminal Background Checks) Improvements Amendments Act that addresses gaps in information available to NICS, such as court decisions related to individuals' mental health status.

We must all work together to help prevent those who exhibit reckless disregard for human life and values access to firearms for criminal purposes. But we must also preserve the constitutional rights of tens of millions of law-abiding Americans to safely and responsibly own, store and use firearms for personal protection, hunting and recreation. America's firearms industry welcomes the opportunity to be a part of a respectful and constructive dialogue on this important topic.

Sincerely,



Jake McGuigan



**A Ban On Modern Sporting Rifles
Will Have Direct Economic Consequences for Connecticut
– As Well As Significant Unintended Consequences**

Connecticut is currently considering a ban on firearms such as semi-automatic rifles and modern sporting rifles. The implementation of such a ban ensures that the firearms industry will not be able to continue to operate effectively in the state – this includes manufacturers as well as wholesalers and retailers.

There Will Be Direct Economic Consequences As A Result of the Proposed Bans

- ❖ The industry currently sells an estimated 14,568 modern sporting rifles and similar types of guns per year that would be affected by various legislative proposals. A prohibition on the sale of guns in this category will impact the state’s economy.
- ❖ Due to this proposal, three major Connecticut based firearms manufacturers have suggested that they may be forced to relocate to more 2nd Amendment friendly states. Were this to happen, Connecticut’s manufacturing sector would lose over a thousand good jobs.¹

Impact of Banning Modern Sporting Rifles In Connecticut²

	Jobs	Wages	Output
Direct	741	\$61,904,539.12	\$287,612,777.31
Supplier	424	\$33,269,185.79	\$76,146,798.02
Induced	603	\$32,396,187.79	\$86,785,394.11
Total	1,768	\$127,569,912.70	\$450,544,969.43
		State Business Taxes	\$13,588,290
		FAET Excise Tax	\$845,232

The Firearms Industry and Its Suppliers are an Important Part of Connecticut’s Economy

- ❖ The Firearms Industry employs about 2,899 people directly and generates an additional 4,441 jobs in supplier and other industries.³
- ❖ In total, the firearms industry and its suppliers currently generate \$522.03 million in wages for Connecticut employees. These are good jobs, paying an average of \$71,121 in wages and benefits.
- ❖ In Connecticut, the industry and its employees pay over \$119.07 million in property, income, and sales taxes. They also pay \$171.15 million in federal taxes and \$24.16 million in federal excise taxes – which contribute to federal programs, many of which are returned to the state in the form of Federal domestic assistance programs. This would be put at risk by a ban on certain products.

The Loss of the Firearms Industry Will Have Significant Negative Consequences for Connecticut’s Economy

- ❖ Should the firearms industry be subject to this draconian ban, the state will feel significant negative consequences that will establish a precedent for other industries.
- ❖ With the Connecticut unemployment rate at 8.6 percent, this means that there are already 160,500 people trying to find jobs in the state and possibly collecting unemployment benefits.⁴ The loss of the firearms industry will cause further unemployment problems for the state.
- ❖ Beyond creating jobs, in 2012 the industry was responsible for as much as \$1.75 billion in total economic activity in Connecticut. This broader activity flows through businesses well beyond firearms. Industries as varied as banking, retail, accounting, metal working, and even in printing, all benefit from the firearms industry for their livelihood.

¹ Colt, Mossberg, and Stag have suggested that they may move operations to another state, according to industry experts.
² Based on figures developed for the National Shooting Sports Foundation by John Dunham & Associates, 2013.
³ Direct jobs are those involved in the manufacturing, wholesaling, and retailing of firearms and related goods. Supplier jobs are defined as jobs that provide essential goods and services to the firearms industry, such as metal processors, engineers, and even janitors. Induced jobs are the result of spending of wages earned by employees in the direct and supplier sectors. These can range from jobs in restaurants that these employees frequent to movie theaters and retail outlets.
⁴ The Bureau of Labor Statistics. Available on-line at: www.bls.gov/lau/home.htm. Data for December-12