



State of Connecticut

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STATE CAPITOL

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Public Safety & Security Committee Public Testimony Thursday, March 14, 2013

Dear Senator Joan Hartley, Representative Stephen Dargan, Senator Anthony Guglielmo Representative Janice Giegler, and members of the Public Safety and Security Committee,

I submit this testimony in opposition to:

S.B. No. 1076 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF GUN VIOLENCE

Let me start by saying that I am all for doing what we can to take the steps necessary for making the people of our society safer. The fact is that no single provision of this proposed bill would lead to that desired effect.

The existing assault weapons ban has had absolutely no impact on reducing gun violence and the only result of adding the additional restrictions outlined in this legislation will be to further limit the ability of law abiding citizens to exercise their 2nd amendment freedoms and more importantly, their ability to protect themselves from those with criminal intent. Statistics on crimes committed with long guns are easy to find and show that almost no crimes are ever committed with them.

These types of guns are typically owned by honest decent people who enjoy hunting and the shooting sports, high school students involved in target shooting leagues and even teenage boys and girls who represent us on the USA Olympic Shooting Team.

There is also the economic impact to our state to consider. Hundreds of jobs are at stake as manufacturers of these types of firearms and magazines are located right here in Connecticut.

I fail to see how the numerous provisions listed in this bill make any particular firearm more or less deadly or would prohibit any future acts of violence that might be committed in the future by criminals bent on harming innocent members of our society through acts of evil.

For example, what does prohibiting the sale of firearms with adjustable stocks or pistol grips or barrel shrouds or flash-hiders accomplish? The answer is absolutely nothing. These features contribute nothing to making any particular firearm more dangerous. They are merely cosmetic features that have no effect on any firearm's operation or lethality.

Provisions to limit the capacity of ammunition magazines are just as pointless. The single most deadly mass murder in US history happened at Virginia Tech in 2007. The gunman shot and killed 32 people and wounded 17 others. One of the weapons used was a 22 caliber pistol with a 10 round magazine. The fact is that a magazine can be changed in only seconds – not anywhere enough time for someone to rush an attacker and disarm them. In the case mentioned, the victims were mostly able bodied college students. If there was an incident where limited magazine capacity could have ever made a difference, I think it would have been there.

The ultimate and most important truth is that ONLY law abiding citizens would ever pay attention to these laws anyway. Violent criminals and mass murderers certainly will not.

The net effect is that the decent law abiding father who will someday be put in a position to defend his family in the event of a home invasion will be limited in his ability to do so effectively. The criminal or criminals will not.

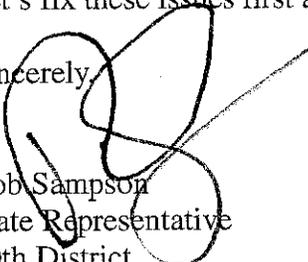
With respect to the many very capable law enforcement officers we have in our society, the fact is that they will typically only arrive after the incident has ended. The victim is the true first responder. These proposed laws will only curtail their chance of survival.

I submit that what we should be doing is finding ways to limit access to firearms to criminals and those with a history of mental illness. There is an OLR report out that shows how few gun crimes are even prosecuted. We can strengthen our NICS system, increase look-backs for mental health and most importantly, **BEGIN TO VIGOROUSLY ENFORCE OUR EXISTING LAWS.** The CT General Assembly passed into law, just in the last session, the repeal of the death penalty and the foolish and dangerous early release of violent criminals from our prison system. I do support the idea of a Gun Offender Registry but even that seems unlikely to prevent future crimes.

If we are serious about protecting our population, the answers are out there. Invest in school security. Improve how we treat and identify those with mental illness. **PUNISH CRIMINALS.** The vast majority of gun violence happens in urban areas, with handguns not rifles, and by career criminals that likely should have been in prison in the first place.

Let's fix these issues first and leave the law abiding citizens in our state alone.

Sincerely,



Rob Sampson
State Representative
80th District