

Haggerty, Katie

From: Joel Zemke <jlz142410@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2015 3:27 PM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Bills Hr6848, 650 and 6962

Please consider the following commentary with regard to the aforementioned Bills as well as general comments.

Overall, I understand the political desire for gun control and the sometimes irrational fears that surround the subject. Guns are in fact dangerous and need to be handled responsibly irrespective of legal requirements. By and large gun owners are very responsible and always keep their equipment as well as associated ammunition under lock and key. Unfortunately, there are always going to be people with guns that will abuse them or treat them inappropriately, regardless of how many laws and restrictions are put in place. Laws associated with gun control almost (but not always) exclusively impact legitimate responsible legal gun owners and since the Newtown incident, Connecticut has been very restrictive to such owners. When changing or adding laws/regulations I hope you will consider the following.

1. Nobody should have their guns/ammunition confiscated because someone else called them a threat - not without prior due process. I believe this to be a constitutional right as well as a basic freedom.
2. It is probable that all the changes being made here will have no real value. Responsible gun owners already keep their guns under lock and key and outlaws/ mentally unbalanced individuals don't really care about the law.
3. If any guns/ammunition are confiscated without due process (a hearing) it is probably illegal and should not be allowed unless there is direct evidence of actual physical violence or extreme mental problems with a perpetrator.
4. The onus for showing that a seizure of arms is appropriate should not rest with the individual from whom the arms were taken but with the person making the decision to confiscate - only they can try to justify their actions.

Freedoms, including the right to keep and bear arms all come with a price. It is the same with owning a car or a knife and sometimes there will be incidents that are unfortunate. Guns, given that a minority really use them are subject to much more scrutiny because associated restrictions don't affect the majority. Nonetheless, rights are rights and the right to keep and bear arms is protected. I would hope for the sake of all responsible gun owners that you will consider why they may feel inappropriately targeted and focus on the real issues that cause problems. I am speaking specifically about identifying individuals who are likely to cause incidents. Specifically, those with a specific mental diagnosis that would put the public at risk. This should not be construed to include everyone who loses their temper from time to time under stressful circumstances and it is not a decision that should be made by a non-professional. I also feel the need to say that just because someone was a combat veteran that they should not be considered mentally incompetent to own a gun.

I hope you will consider my commentary,

Thank you,

Joel Zemke