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Related Bills: An Act Concerning Firearm Safety; An Act Concerning Temporary Restraining Orders

The right to keep and bear arms is a natural right. It allows us to preserve our rights to life and liberty. It is guaranteed to us by both our national and state constitutions. The second amendment of the U.S. constitution states that “the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.” Connecticut's constitution states, “Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state.” Connecticut law must comply with both the national and state constitutions. Any law that lessens a Connecticut citizen's ability to keep and bear arms infringes on a right that is doubly guaranteed to him. Such a law contradicts the higher law of both constitutions and is null and void.

The bills proposed today contradict both our national and state constitutions. They violate our right to bear arms, right to personal property, and right to due process of law.

An Act Concerning Firearm Safety infringes upon our right to keep and bear arms because it puts unnecessary burdens on gun owners and hinders them from easily accessing their firearms. This law would require gun owners to keep their firearms locked up when not in close reach. This requirement makes it difficult to access the firearms in an emergency.

An Act Concerning Temporary Restraining Orders contradicts our right to personal property and right to due process. Requiring a person who is the subject of a restraining order to surrender his firearms without due process violates his fourth and fifth amendment rights. In our legal system, a person is innocent until proven guilty. This law would have us assume that a person is guilty.

The bills proposed today seek to keep people safe from gun violence. However, I know from experience that a lack of firearms does not ensure safety or peace of mind. Last year, I worked in Connecticut as a substitute teacher. There was one incident in which our entire school was in danger, and we were defenseless. In the second week of the school year, I went to an elementary school in Manchester. During gym class, one of the teachers came into the gymnasium and told us that we were in a lockdown. There was a man outside who was suspected of having a firearm. We turned off the lights and hid behind the curtain on the stage. All of us were huddled together in the dark, not making a sound. As I sat in that small space, I thought that we would be the next Sandy Hook, and I was terrified. I thought, “How are we going to protect ourselves?” I sincerely wished that I had a gun to protect myself with. We had put ourselves into the worst tactical position possible. We were backed into a corner with nowhere to flee and nothing to protect ourselves with. If a criminal came in, he would have an easy time killing us.

If the goal is to keep the citizens of Connecticut safe, then allow the citizens to be able to protect themselves. These new gun bills do nothing to make us safer. They only prevent us from protecting ourselves. In trying to make us safer, the government has put us in greater danger and has taken away much of our rights at the same time. We need to be stronger than the criminals so that we can protect both ourselves and the state.