

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee in support of Proposed Senate Bill No. 650, House Bill No. 6848, and House Bill No. 6962.

I am in favor of SB-00650 and HB-06848

I was in an abusive relationship as a teenager in CT more than 20 years ago. I cannot stress enough how hard it is when a victim actually leaves an abuser. Afraid that a restraining order would not keep my abuser away, the only way I was able to feel safe was to move far away before ending the relationship. I do believe it could have been an escalated and tragic end had I stayed near, especially considering an easy access to firearms. SB 650 provides more protection for victims of domestic violence. It proposes that the courts be allowed to remove firearms during ex parte restraining orders. Guns should be surrendered immediately when a restraining order is in effect. And they should be kept away until it is seen by the courts as safe to return them.

Some people oppose these bills citing due process of the law. The idea of a restraining order comes from there needing to be an immediate response. It is imperative that abusers not have access to guns right when a victim decides to leave. That is the period of time victims are the most at risk to be harmed by their abusers. House Bill 6848 would allow a temporary removal of guns and ammunition until it is clear it is safe for the person to have access. Please allow women and children in domestic violence situations feel a greater sense of safety by passing these bills.

I am also in favor of House Bill 06962

This will hold irresponsible gun owners liable for negligence. Just this week a father in Mornoe, CT accidentally shot his son while cleaning his gun and not realizing it was loaded. This is unsafe firearm use. No more children and innocent people should have to sustain gun injury and death resulting from unsafe gun storage and negligence. If not realizing just how quickly being unsafe can harm or kill your own family members, than maybe knowing you will also be held liable, will help reduce unnecessary gun violence. When I drop my children off at playdates I ask if there are guns in the home. When the answer is yes, I ask how they are stored. And I ask more questions. I believe that this should be a no-brainer for gun owners—of course your guns should be stored safely and of course you should know how to use them safely. If not, you suffer not only possible harm to your loved ones, but also a liability for not using them safely. If you are drinking and driving and you hit another person, you are held liable, because it is dangerous to do so. It seems like common sense that we hold negligent gun owners liable in the same way.

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