

March 11, 2015

Testimony to CT Gen'l Assembly Judiciary Committee in support of:

SB 650 An Act Concerning Temporary Restraining Orders

HB 6848 An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence

HB 6962 An Act Concerning Firearm Safety

Mr. Chairmen and members of the Judiciary Committee,

Hello. My name is Jonathan Perloe. I live in the 151st District in Cos Cob. I am a leader of the *Greenwich Council Against Gun Violence*, a grassroots organization founded in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook School shooting.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony explaining why I support passage of these three bills that will help to reduce gun violence in CT:

- SB 650 An Act Concerning Temporary Restraining Orders
- HB 6848 An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence
- HB 6962 An Act Concerning Firearm Safety

The *Greenwich Council Against Gun Violence* is a small, informal group of concerned citizens, but through our grassroots efforts, we have around 1,000 supporters. Above all else, we want one thing: to see fewer of our children, our families, our neighbors and our co-workers killed or injured by firearms. I'm here today because even in CT, with one of the lowest gun death rates in the country, too many people are killed by guns, including Lori Jackson who was killed last year by her abusive husband while under the protection of a temporary restraining order.

Regarding the two domestic violence bills, SB 650 and HB 6848, a judge issues a temporary restraining order because he or she believes the victim faces "immediate and present physical danger" from the offender. Under these circumstances, as I see it, it's just common sense to immediately prohibit the offender from possessing a gun. The statistics on intimate partner homicide prove that the presence of firearms substantially increases the risk

of death in domestic abuse situations. This is not a theoretical discussion.

The opponents of this legislation complain about it infringing on their 2nd Amendment right. As part of our Constitution, I respect the 2nd Amendment. But I ask you to balance it with the inalienable right to “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness” spelled out in the Declaration of Independence. The state isn’t protecting these rights if a woman is scared to death of her abusive partner because he’s allowed to keep his guns.

Gun advocates are quick to use the Constitution to oppose gun safety laws, but they forget that no stronger defender of the 2nd Amendment than Supreme Court Justice Scalia said, “like most rights, the right secured by the Second Amendment is not unlimited.”

With respect to HB 6962, I support expanding safe storage of firearms to require gun owners to keep their guns secure from any person, not just minors and those believed to be dangerous or prohibited from owning guns.

To me, it’s common sense that someone who owns a lethal weapon should be responsible to keep it out of the hands of other people. It’s too difficult to know who may be prohibited from owning a gun, or who might be a danger to themselves or others.

With rights come responsibilities. For gun owners, I believe that means keeping their guns absolutely secure. Since the presence of a firearm in the home substantially increases the risk of death to its occupants, this bill will keep both them and everyone else safer.

I want to thank Senator Looney, Representative Sharkey, all the co-sponsors of these bills and Governor Malloy for their leadership and courage in bringing forth these measures to reduce gun violence in CT.

Respectfully,

Jonathan Perloe
Cos Cob, CT