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CGA Government Judiciary Committee

March 14, 2016 Public Hearing

HB 5054 AA Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence

Comments by Jane Eyes, Social Policy Director

The League of Women Voters of Connecticut is a nonpartisan, statewide organization committed to effective public policy, the active involvement of citizens in their government and increasing the understanding of major public policy issues.

The League has supported strong measures to protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons. We advocated for CT's 1994 assault weapons ban, the 2007 law mandating the reporting of a theft or loss of a firearm, and the provisions of the 2013 Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety Act.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on HB 5054, a bill that offers Connecticut the opportunity to increase protection of victims of domestic violence from risk of death or serious injury. HB 5054 would remove firearms from subjects of temporary restraining orders pending a hearing to take place no more than 14 days later.

SB 5054 is an important measure to protect women who are struggling to escape abusive relationships during their most vulnerable time immediately after they have requested a restraining order. Testimony furnished on a similar bill during the 2015 legislative session—SB 650—pointed to data compiled by the CT Coalition Against Domestic Violence that over 150 women were killed in the 12-year period from 2000-2012 at the hands of a domestic partner, that the majority of them were killed by firearms, and that state laws prohibiting firearm possession on a temporary basis by persons subject to restraining orders can reduce the rate of intimate partner homicide. Connecticut should join the other states which already allow judges to remove firearms during temporary restraining orders.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment.