

March 14, 2016

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

The Newtown Action Alliance urges you to support HB 5054, An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence and SB 429, An Act Concerning Service of Restraining Orders. We also urge you to oppose HB 5597, An Act Protecting Domestic Violence Victims Seeking Restraining Orders.

HB 5054 and SB 429:

According to the Everytown for Gun Safety report (<http://everytownresearch.org/reports/guns-and-violence-against-women/>),

- More than half of women murdered with guns in the U.S. in 2011 — at least 53 percent — were killed by intimate partners or family members.
- Domestic violence in America is to a significant degree a problem of gun violence. Over the past 25 years, more intimate partner homicides in the U.S. have been committed with guns than with all other weapons combined.
- People with a history of committing domestic violence are five times more likely to subsequently murder an intimate partner when a firearm is in the house.
- At the same time, an astonishing share of gun violence in America is driven by domestic violence. More than half of women murdered with guns in the U.S. in 2011 — at least 53 percent — were killed by intimate partners or family members.⁵
- And research by Everytown for Gun Safety establishes that this is also true for mass shootings: in 57 percent of the mass shootings between January 2009 and June 2014, the perpetrator killed an intimate partner or family member.⁶

According to the Center for American Progress report from 2015 (attached), “Fatal domestic violence is frequently caused by guns. Women are 500% more likely to be murdered by an intimate partner when a gun is present and there is a history of domestic violence. Connecticut is home to high levels of gun violence that particularly affect victims of domestic violence: Between 2003 and 2012, 109 people in Connecticut were killed by an intimate partner. Nearly half of those murdered by an intimate partner—41.3 percent— were killed with a gun.”

Having sworn police officers make service of temporary restraining orders and removing firearms from subjects of temporary restraining orders pending a hearing to take place no more than 14 days later, are common sense measures.

Other states that already have laws in place to prevent individuals subject to temporary restraining orders from accessing firearms by court order include:

- Arizona⁷
- California⁸
- Hawaii⁹
- Illinois¹⁰
- Massachusetts

- Michigan☐
- Montana☐
- Nebraska☐
- New Hampshire
- New Jersey☐
- New York☐
- North Carolina
- North Dakota☐
- Pennsylvania☐
- Texas☐
- Utah☐
- Virginia
- Washington☐
- West Virginia 11

HB 5597:

According to the Battered Women's Justice Project report (attached), "Connecticut's Risk Warrant statute, while a valuable tool, does not fully address the needs and concerns of domestic violence victims and should not be the only option available to victims who believe their abusers' access to firearms is a safety risk to them. Rather, the Battered Women's Justice Project deems giving judges the discretion and authority to order the surrender of firearms in an ex parte or temporary civil restraining order to be a substantially sounder policy because the responsibility and burden shifts from the victim to the state and courts, and it does not add an extra hurdle for victims. At least twenty states¹ concur and have passed legislation authorizing or requiring the surrender of firearms at the ex parte stage." We support Battered Women's Justice Project's recommendation therefore we oppose HB 5507.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Po Murray
Chairman
Newtown Action Alliance
