

Carroll, Rhonda

From: wskratt@gmail.com on behalf of Wendy Skratt <w@skratt.net>
Sent: Friday, March 11, 2016 10:20 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Testimony Supporting SB 429 & HB 5054, Opposing HB 5597

March 11, 2016

Testimony to CT General Assembly Judiciary Committee in support of:
SB 429, An Act Concerning Service of Restraining Orders
HB 5054, An Act Protecting Victims of Domestic Violence

and in opposition to:
HB 5597, An Act Protecting Domestic Violence Victims Seeking Restraining Orders

Mr Chairmen and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Wendy Skratt and I live in the 146th District in Stamford with my husband and two young kids. I am an advocate for gun safety and I work with several organizations throughout CT to this affect.

Regarding the domestic violence/TRO bills, SB 429 and HB 5054, I'd like to share with you an experience of mine. About two years ago, a high school friend of mine filed for divorce from her husband. She was sharing some basic details of the events on Facebook so that her friends could provide moral support, myself among them. Her husband was dragging out the legal proceedings and when he had exhausted all his legal delays, he started coming to her house (from which he had previously moved out) always to look for one item or another that he said he'd left behind. It evolved into harassment and she filed for a temporary restraining order. I will always remember the day she posted about her inability to have his personal firearms removed from him during the wait time to go before a judge. She worked from home, so she didn't even have the opportunity to go to a workplace during the day to have the safety of others around her. She posted regularly throughout the days, every day, to let us all know that she was ok. We all counted down the days together before she got before a judge. Her kids were college age and they were the ones who kept guard... against their father, during this period. This family and those who care about them were lucky. They managed to rally enough resources to head off any potential trouble. But everyone involved knew the potential was there. We know the statistics.

Others are not so lucky. In CT, Lori Jackson was killed, here in CT, by her abusive husband while supposedly under protection of a temporary restraining order. This is not protection. We need to do better. We cannot rely on luck. As a society, we need to create better solutions. SB 429 and HB 5054 are better solutions. Gun owners talk a lot about their safety, and their need to protect it. But rarely about the risk that guns introduce into particular environments. The filing of a temporary restraining order is one such environment. No one should have to put their life in additional danger to get away from abusive situations. But that's the way it currently stands. I urge you to support these legislative solutions.

Also, I oppose HB 5597, because it sets in motion the risk warrant process if a restraining order indicates that the subject is in possession of a firearm. Many victims of abuse fear violent reprisals from the abuser when police are brought to the home who then may get an immediate warrant to remove the subject's firearms. These victims much prefer the safer route of going to the court for a restraining order.

Respectfully,

Wendy Skratt
Stamford, CT

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