

Hobart, Jamie

From: Edward Mocsi <emocsi@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 02, 2016 4:26 PM
To: pstestimony
Subject: Please Support HB 5408, Presentation of Carry Permits

To members of the Public Safety and Security Committee of the CT Legislature:

I wish to voice my unequivocal support for HB 5408, which requires persons who carry handguns in public to have their permits on their person at all times and to show those permits when requested by police.

My support for this bill is bolstered by a harrowing personal experience: This January, following the major snowstorm, I took my ten-year old daughter and one of her friends to our local sledding hill in Fairfield. The hill was crowded with hundreds of children. While my daughter and her friend were sledding, I noticed that a young man (in his 20s or 30s) had a clearly visible pistol on his waist, and was circulating and sledding among the children. I pointed this out to the father of my daughter's friend. A brave man with military training — he approached the young man with the gun and discreetly but firmly asked him if he was a law enforcement officer. The young man said he was not. Hesitantly, I approached and asked him why he had a gun in this setting, among hundreds of children. He replied "Connecticut is an open carry state, and it's my right". I replied that it felt it was dangerous and unsettling, and politely asked if he would put the weapon in his car. He stated: "I will not fall for your agenda, and I will not put my gun in my car". By this time, a small crowd had gathered around us. Not knowing what else to do, I backed away and went to look for my daughter to tell her we have to leave immediately. My friend did the same. Other parents had the same reaction. As we were leaving to look for our children, we noticed that the man with a gun motioned to his family that they need to go, and they did, quickly.

I will never know if the man had a permit to carry his weapon, and even if I had called the police (which I thought about doing but felt it would incite panic), they would not have been able to demand to see his permit. That is a travesty.

The open carrying of handguns generates fear and intimidation among many members of the public. An individual's refusal to show their permit when requested by a policeman goes even further in instilling fear. The approval of this bill is critical in honoring the public's right to shop, live, and go about their business in a climate of relative safety and security.

Sincerely,

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