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**Testimony to the Public Safety Committee in support of HB 5408 (raised) and SB 20, and in opposition to HB 5404 (raised)**

**I am writing to urge you to vote YES on HB 5408 and SB 20, and NO on HB 5409.**

For several years I have worked or shopped in downtown Bridgeport. I was alarmed to learn that recently a man came into the Subway shop where I have often purchased lunch openly carrying a firearm. Even more alarming, when police officers requested that the man show a pistol permit, the man refused.

This is simply wrong.

If a person is carrying a firearm in public, law enforcement has a duty to citizens to ensure that the person is legally able to do so. The only way it is legal for the person to be carrying the firearm is for him/her to also be carrying a valid pistol permit. Therefore, police officers must be able to verify the legality of the carry, and the only way to do that is to require that permits be shown when requested to do so by law enforcement officers.

It is enough that I fear for my safety by being in the presence of firearms carried by non-professionals, who are not insured should an accident occur (as would be the case with a car). But to not even know for certain if the firearm is being possessed and carried legally is simply not acceptable.

I also ask your support for SB 20, which simply amends the definition of intoxication while carrying a firearm to be the same as intoxication while driving. It just makes sense to standardize this, as in both cases, the person involved is handling a dangerous weapon.

Last, I ask that you oppose HB 5409. Police chiefs MUST be allowed to collect necessary evidence to uphold their determination of suitability for a pistol permit. Their signature on the application means they have done their due diligence to ensure that the person applying will be a truly responsible gun owner. Chiefs must not be impeded in gathering the information they need to make that critical determination.

Thank you for your consideration.



Lisa Labella