

Testimony on Raised Senate Bill No. 234.

An Act Concerning the Location of a Firearms Training Facility

Public hearing – March 3, 2016

Public Safety & Security Committee

Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to submit testimony. I write in support of raised Senate Bill 234, ***An Act Concerning the Location of a Firearms Training Facility***. This proposal would require construction by a state agency of any firearms training facility to be located on previously purchased state-owned or leased property, and for DESPP to conduct a detailed study its firearms training needs and existing facilities.

DESPP and DAS have proposed to purchase a relatively large tract of land to purchase and construct a firearms training facility for the State Police and are currently in the process of reviewing two sites for purchase, one in East Windsor and one in Willington for suitability as the location of this new training facility. Both municipalities (and their residents) are opposed to having this training center located within their towns.

My support for this bill is based on both the current state budget crisis and the intent to locate a large facility in a municipality regardless of the local residents' opposition:

1. **Budget.** At a time when the state budget is in crisis with billion dollar deficits forecast for the next two fiscal years, purchasing a large track of land to build a brand new facility when other options are available at existing facilities is an extravagant expenditure of funds that the state can't afford. As with anyone facing tightening budgets, DESPP needs to become more creative and cost-conscious in addressing their needs. The provisions of this bill will hopefully induce a more resourceful and economical solution to the State Police training needs.
2. **Local concerns.** As a Willington resident who lives within one-mile of the site located in Willington, the site proposed by DESPP and DAS in Willington deeply concerns me. There are numerous residential properties, a school, a library, and two churches within one mile of the property under review for the firearms training facility. Both construction of the facility and operations at the facility following construction at the facility would be a major disruption to our small community. The local roads are relatively narrow, and dotted with homes and farms. Once constructed, training that reportedly could occur all days of the week with some exercises at night (especially with un-baffled gun ranges) will be a major disturbance to the local residents. Additionally, the state's economy remains fragile. The construction of a facility that will lower property values in the area is unconscionable and counter-productive to the local economy.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

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