2017-02-13

RE: Governor's H.B. No. 7027 'AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.'

TO: Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Formica, Representative Ziobron, and members of the Appropriations Committee; thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony.

I'm alarmed at Governor Malloy's attack on Connecticut residents who currently have or may choose to get a pistol permit.

This proposed rate hike of over 400% is nothing short of a push to limit permit holders to the wealthy. I urge that you OPPOSE Sections 48 (T1854) and 58 (T1938) of H.B. 7027 that support the Governor's proposed pistol permit rate increase. By appropriating the funds received from the rate increases you will be supporting the pistol permit and application fee increases.

If passed this would mean an over 850% fee increase for pistol permit holders over the last five years. Currently, the cost of Connecticut pistol permits is already triple the national average.

There are approximately 250,000 active pistol permits in CT as of early 2016. This would mean that a $230 increase would amount to an additional $57,500,000 in revenue (provided everyone chose to or were able to maintain their permit) every 5 years (the term of a permit).

There are 2,566,673 licensed drivers as of 2015, renewing every 6 years. If this was really about increasing revenue the same amount could be generated by a very modest increase about $27 per driver's license renewal.

If the current budget proposal was to pass, there would be many who would not renew their pistol permit because they won't be able to afford it, therefore reducing the potential $57,500,000 increase and infringing on the rights of the poor to defend themselves. However most (if not all) drivers would renew their licenses with a $25-$30 increase since they need it to get to their jobs, transport their children, get groceries, etc., almost guaranteeing the revenue increase.

That being said, I do not believe that increasing the tax burden on CT citizens is the way to solve this issue. Reducing spending and costs should be the main thrust of bringing the deficit under control.

There are other ways to reduce spending in the area of firearms permitting. I support the suggestions made by the Connecticut Citizens Defense League (CCDL) organization and have listed some of them below.

I firmly believe that this is just a back-door way to penalize law-abiding gun owners and reduce their numbers by making it cost-prohibitive.

I urge that you do not support any more attacks on the law-abiding gun owners of this state.

Thank you for your consideration.

William D Curlew
Windsor CT

CCDL Suggestions for Budget Trimming, from 2017/02/11 press release:

1. Remove pistol permitting responsibilities entirely from municipalities. Currently, the municipalities have a majority of the burden in the application process, and that work is entirely useless in terms of public safety.
2. All permits would be issued directly, the same day at the Special Licensing and Firearms Unit (SLFU) at DESPP headquarters in Middletown, Connecticut for a flat application fee of $100 which includes

the $16.75 IAFIS query fee. No state background check fee (currently $50) is authorized by law anyway, and this is a good time to eliminate that illegal fee.

3. SLFU already conducts the same IAFIS checks and their own instant in-house state conviction history database search imediately when an application is submitted. IAFIS is guaranteed to return fingerprint results in less than two hours. Pistol permit issuance times are thus decreased from months to a few hours, reducing employee processing expense, time and effort.
4. Remove any and all 'suitability' requirements from the Connecticut General Statutes, which are catch-alls that allow local issuing authorities to deny people their right to armed self-defense on arbitrary and capricious grounds, which are often overturned on appeal at the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners.

Utilizing this simple plan, the legislature could work with Connecticut Carry to remove waste all over the state in municipal and state departments, saving countless amounts of money, retaining the same or increased levels of public safety, and keeping the public safe by expediting their ability to defend themselves.