I am writing in support of Bill # 5813 – An act Concerning the Location of Firearms Training Facilities:

As the Senator who represents the Northeastern Towns of Plainfield, Griswold, Voluntown, Sterling I strongly support the concept of not authorizing the State to locate a Firearms Training Facility in a Town without the approval of the municipality by referendum.

The Northeastern Corner of CT is quiet and is home to the beautiful Patchaug State Forest. The Forest is truly unique place that allows any CT citizen or visitor to CT to experience CT the way it was hundreds of years ago – the sounds, smells and vistas coupled with the serene quiet of the Forest is a treasured escape from the bustle of today’s lifestyle.

When a Firearms training facility was proposed in this area and bounced from Town to Town the outcry was unprecedented. Town Hall Meetings burst at the seams with the largest crowds ever seen – all in protest of the plan and in support of their Forest. The Forest is a wonderful tourist destination with campers coming nationwide to experience a slice of heaven in CT. Can you imagine a gun range here?

Observing the angst and hard fought battle the citizens of these towns endured pushing back against the State’s proposal made me more firm in my resolve that no Town should have something as large as this pushed onto them by the State without them having a voice. Remember: People who live in these towns chose it for a reason and a way of life.

There are many alternate options for a new Firearms training facility including upgrading the existing one in Simsbury, negotiating use of the new National Guard Facility in East Haven or finding a Town that would welcome this in their town. In our dire financial condition, it is difficult to image spending 30-50 million dollars on such a project makes good financial stewardship of taxpayer dollars.

Thank you-