

Public Hearing – March 11, 2019.

Unfortunately work prevents me from attending the public hearing today on even more proposed gun control measures. It is my position that we are over-reaching with the unwarranted restrictions that this state is putting, and attempting to put, on law-abiding gun owners.

If this legislature is truly committed to curbing gun violence, then the real issue of mental illness needs to be front and center in any debate. The last onerous legislation that was passed in our state in response to the Sandy Hook tragedy stated in its preamble that it would address this issue. In fact, it has done nothing but punish law-abiding citizens and drive gun and ammunition manufacturers out of our state. As for the mental illness portion, nothing of any import has happened.

I am asking you to oppose HB 7218, HB 7219, and HB 7223, and support HB 5227 and HB 5870. The first three will unfairly impose restrictions on legitimate and responsible gun owners, while doing virtually nothing to prevent gun violence or illegal activity. HB 7218 is ineffective as proposed because it does not teach safety. I grew up in a house with guns that were not locked up, and my extended family had guns in their houses as well. We were all taught from day one about gun safety, and we knew *without question* that firearms were to be handled only under adult supervision. Education is the most important aspect of gun safety, and is the only thing that will prevent gun violence.

HB 7219 is overly broad as written. It appears that the drafters of this bill did not do their homework and therefore, this bill is premature. It should not be passed as a “feel-good” measure.

HB 7223 will make it extremely difficult for law abiding citizens to visit gun ranges or engage in competitive shooting. Having to comply with this proposed law will present a hardship for law abiding citizens. It will contribute nothing to the prevention of gun violence, unless the legislature is of the impression that individuals with illegal firearms, or no firearms training, will have the foresight and responsibility to lock their firearms when exiting their vehicles for the purpose of, for example, conducting a drug deal.

As for the latter two, HB 5870 and HB 5227, I am asking that you support these bills. HB 5870 will allow the transfer of certain firearms among law-abiding gun owners. There is no legitimate reason not to allow this measure to pass.

If HB 5227 does not pass, the result will fly in the face of our history and the structure of our government. As we know from the history of our nation, municipalities only have power because they are granted a certain status by the state. Because we are all under the control of the same state government, it would be prejudicial to allow gun owners in one town different rights from gun owners in another town. We are all citizens of Connecticut, and since our concealed carry permits allow us to carry within the state, there would leave a gap for a conflict of laws if this bill does not pass.

I am also asking that you also oppose SB 60 as it is akin to a “search and seizure” for no reason. I believe there are constitutional concerns should this bill pass, as I believe that the 4th Amendment to the US Constitution will prohibit such actions. There is no legitimate reason for such an expansion of police power.

I ask that you support SB 940, as it is reasonable to carry a firearm for self-defense purposes at all times. Many of the state parks and forests have hiking trails which often lead to an individual being alone deep in the woods. There have been numerous times when individuals

have been attacked, injured, and even killed because they were jogging or hiking alone. In addition, the proliferation of dangerous wildlife, such as bears, bobcats, and coyotes in forested areas can put individuals in defenseless positions. There is absolutely no valid reason for this bill to be defeated, and I ask that you support it.

Thank you.

Sandra J. Akoury