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SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Good morning. We are going to call to order this public hearing of the Judiciary Committee. I’m going to first go to Representative Blumenthal for an announcement.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Hi, everyone. These are the safety instructions. In the safety -- excuse me. In the interest of safety, I would ask you to note the location of and access to the exits in this hearing room. The two doors through which you entered the room are the emergency exits and are marked with exit signs. In the event of an emergency, please walk quickly to the nearest exit. After exiting the room, proceed to the main stairs
or follow the exit signs to one of the fire stairs. Please quickly exit the building and following any instructions from the Capitol Police. Do not delay and do not return unless and until you are advised that it is safe to do so. In the event of a lockdown announcement, please remain in the hearing room, stay away from the exit doors, and seek concealment behind desks and chairs until an all-clear announcement is heard. Thanks.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. How this hearing will be conducted is the first hour will be for public officials. After that point, we will go to the public list, and will be alternating. Everyone gets three minutes to testify. We’re going to try to hold you close to the three minutes because we have a lot of people here to testify, and I would like for everyone to actually get their opportunity and not have to leave. I would also ask committee members that while we are very happy to have questions time will expire quickly if we debate with members of the public, so please do not do that. We’re going to begin with State Representative Sean Scanlon and Kristin and Mike Song if they are here.

REP. SCANLON (98TH): Good morning, Chairs. Happy birthday, Senator Winfield. You’re in for a great birthday. My name is Representative Sean Scanlon, and I represent the towns of Guilford and Branford, and today, I’m joined by two good friends and constituents, Kristin and Mike Song. I’m gonna let them do the bulk of the talking here, but I’ll just say this from the outset -- when they lost their son, Ethan, and came to me after a few months and said, we want to get working on this, we did get working on it, and we have worked on that in a
bipartisan and consensus-driven approach. And, I think the bill before you today represents a bill that is not just common sense, but it’s one that I think everyone on both sides of the aisle should get behind, and frankly, they are getting behind. And, a lot of that is a testament to the courage of the people who are sitting beside me, Kristin and Mike Song, who in the darkest moment of their lives came forward and tried to bring all of us into the light in the name of their son, Ethan, and everyone who’s been lost by gun violence, and so I’d like to turn it over to Kristin.

KRISTIN SONG: I heard that heat click on and my brother starting the shower. I’m so warm in bed. I don’t want to get up, not yet. I turned on my music. Angel by Jimi Hendrix was playing. I love that song. I thought about my day. You see, I’m finally getting my braces off. I mean I had it rough. It’s hard being a teenager with a mouth full of metal, but I never complained. I really have come a long way since last year. In June of 2017, I made it through a major surgery. Mom and dad sat me down before my surgery. They told me I would be on powerful pain meds that can be addicting. I only took seven pills in total. My doctor was really impressed. What can I say? I’m song strong. I’m doing well in school. Next year, I’ll be in honor’s classes. I have a great group of friends. I’m healthy, and most importantly, I’m gonna be taller than my brother. The one thing I’m still trying to figure out is girls. I told my mom I was having trouble talking to them. They are really confusing. My mom, my biggest cheerleader told me I was a catch, you’re funny, you’re smart, you’re adorable. I kind of like this girl in my class. It took all
my courage to text her. I’m glad I did. It didn’t work out, but it was good practice. Onward! I wonder what it feels like to be in love? I bet it’s amazing. I heard my parents talking downstairs, probably planning out the day. They always get up at 5:30 a.m., go downstairs, have coffee, and chat. I knew it was time to get up, but I was still comfortable. I heard Evan leave for school, and I heard my mom bounding up the stairs. Watch, I know what she’s gonna say. Knock, knock, shake a leg sweetie. You’re getting your braces off in 30 minutes. Jump in the shower. She is very predictable. We headed off to the orthodontist. Today, is gonna be a good day. It took a while to pry all that metal out of my mouth, but finally, I am free. My mom just stared at me and gave me a big hug, and announced to everyone in the office that I was so handsome. In the middle of the office, really? Pretty embarrassing, but I let it pass. While I have to say, I walked a little bit taller that day. We got out of the doctor’s office at 10:30 a.m., and mom snapped a picture of me and sent it to dad. Who would have thought that that would be the last picture of me? To celebrate this monumental occasion, we decided to go out for breakfast. I swung my backpack in the backseat and said, let’s roll. We both were in great moods, and we had the best conversation at breakfast. We finally agreed on some very important issues. First, I would go to college, and then join the military. Second, we decided that I was going to first ask my wife if she wanted seven children and not just to assume. You see, when I get married, I want my homelife to be like my home now -- loud, fun, loving, and with awesome kitchen dance parties.
I have such big dreams. My mom held my hands, looked into my eyes, and said, you got this. You have your whole life ahead of you. I munched on my bagel and lox, and thought yeah, I got this.

At home, I got on the floor and was playing with our foster dog. The sun was streaming through the window, and it felt good on my face. My mom heard me and rounded the corner. She just stared at me. I said, what? She said, I was just drinking you in. Whatever that means. She was always saying stuff like that. My friend came over, and we were cracking each other up -- you know, teenage boy humor. I asked my mom if I could go to my friend’s house for a while. She was making a special dinner for me. We headed out, and she yelled to be back in an hour. I yelled, okay, love you, and walked out of my home for the last time. I couldn’t believe how nice it was outside. The sky was that deep blue with puffy clouds, and it was warm out, a nice winter’s day. It felt good to be alive. We walked to my friend’s house because his dad had guns. His dad was awesome. He let me handle and shoot his guns in the backyard. My friend and I had been playing, posing, making videos with the guns for the last six months. We were posting on our fake social media accounts. I didn’t want my family to see. I know my mom would have lost it. I mean what is cooler than a teenager with a gun. Every time we pose, we get a ton of likes. Hey, guns are making us popular. I mean we were the only Guilford kids who had such easy access to guns. My next pose is gonna be lit. [Bell].

Oh, my God. What did I do? How did a bullet get in the gun? We have been dry firing them for months and nothing happened. Who loaded the gun? I can
hear my friend calling 9-1-1. I’m trying to breath, but there’s so much blood. I keep choking on it. I am in and out of consciousness. No please, God. I have so much to live for. I have such big plans. I want to live! I want to live! I hear the EMTs and the firemen racing up the stairs. They stop short. They have a look of horror on their face. Oh, no. it must be bad. I hear the EMT talking. I hear them say, part of my head is gone. I cry out, but nobody can hear me. I am dying. I am so scared. I want my mommy. She will make it better. The EMTs start working on me, but they know they can’t save me. We race by my street. I wonder if my mom heard the ambulance scream by. I know she will be in the kitchen making my special dinner. Please, God, give her some more time before she finds out that I am gone. Give her some more time to be at peace before her whole world comes crashing down on her. I know I am clinging to life. I know it is over. I feel my body slowly shutting down.

We pull into the ER, and the trauma team races out to the ambulance. I see the sadness in their eyes. They’re trained to save me, not to watch death slowly steal me from them. I want my family now. I want to tell them I’m sorry. I know I have shattered their lives. Please keep me alive until my mom and dad can get here. I don’t want to die alone. I know the team is giving up. What could they really do? My family waits in a tiny room. my mom’s frantic. She is like a caged animal. The ER doctor comes in, and my mother almost jumps at him. Where is Ethan? Is he alive? I want to see him, she screams, but the ER doctor slides down the wall and tells them that their beautiful boy is gone. He was shot in the head. I hear their heart breaking,
guttural raw sobs. A gun -- where did he get access to a gun, my father yells? I want my family to come in. I hear my mom asking, begging to say goodbye to me, and I want to say goodbye to my family, but they won’t let them. They told them to remember your beautiful boy when you last saw him.

I am so alone. All the doctor’s and nurses have left. My family is leaving the hospital with dazes looks in their eyes. They are forever changed. No, wait! Please come back! We are Song 5-forever. A man comes in, covers me with a sheet, and slowly wheels me to the morgue. I’m so cold. I watch my mother and I worry. I know she puts on a good front, and she’s a pretty good actress, but I see her. I see when she’s alone, when she thinks no one is watching, hear heartbreak, her tears, her sobs. I think she has cried a million tears. She tries to run, but the darkness catches up and envelopes her. She can’t outrun sadness. It will always find her. She rages because I know she would have taken that bullet for me, so that I could have lived. She would have taken that bullet for any one of her children.

She keeps herself so busy during the day. It helps chase away her depression, so I visit her at night when her defenses are down, when her mind is quiet, and for a moment, she lets me in. For a moment, she is at peace, but it never lasts. I vanish like the mist, and I leave her weeping. It is like she has an anchor around her ankles pulling her into the abyss. She is exhausted trying to just keep afloat. I wonder what it would have been like to graduate college, serve my beloved country, fall in love, say my wedding vows, hear my baby’s first cry, tuck my children into bed and whisper you are so loved and
cherished -- like my mom said to me every night. I am sorry I will not be the best man at my brother’s wedding or give my sister’s fiancé a hard time, or tell my kids to slow down on the ski slopes. I won’t be able to wipe away my daughter’s tears after her first heartbreak or tell my son not to be a man as to choose empathy over dominance, kindness over violence, love over anger. I won’t be able to sit by my parent’s bedside when they are dying, hold their hands, and tell them how much I love and cherish them. I wanted to go into the military because I love this country. I wanted to protect it from our enemies. I never thought Americans would be waging war on each other. Why do we tear each other down when we don’t agree? What has that gotten us? We all want the same things -- to keep our loved ones safe. Sometimes you need to give a little for the greater good. It’s not all about you, and it’s certainly not all about me. It’s about us. Remember the lyrics from America the Beautiful and “crown thy good with brotherhood?” -- “Oh, beautiful heroes proved who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life?”

When you step up to testify today, imagine that you are in my mother’s shoes. Imagine your child is the one that has been shot and killed. Children and guns are a deadly combination. Alone, we can do so little, but together, we can do so much. I know in my heart that every one of you here today would have raced to my side to try and save me. The truth is you always know the right thing to do. The hard part is doing the right thing, but I have faith. I know there is a hero in every one of you. So, what are you waiting for? Be a hero. Save a life. [Clearing throat].
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions from members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very -- sorry. Chairman Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Just real quick. I just -- I just want to thank you for being here today, for being able to share your story. I mean I don’t know how any of us who are parents can sit here and not -- not picture our own kids when you are reading this and say, you know, it could have been mine. And, I just I want to thank you both for your courage, and your willingness to come here and sit in front of 600 people in this room and state tv cameras and everything else, and know -- you know, and try to do what you think is best to make sure that your -- your child’s death is not in vain, and I want to thank you, and I want to thank Sean, and the other members of the Guilford delegation -- Senator and Representative for their work in bringing this to us. So, thank you all very, very much.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. And, thank you very much for your testimony today. Hold on a second. There is -- there is a member who would like to ask a question. Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, and you know, it’s hard to listen without tearing up, you know. And, I -- I just want to share with you that in 1990 I was involved in a very similar situation, and 17-year-old in his bedroom with a shotgun, and he ended up shooting himself in the head accidentally. His -- his best friend was sitting on the bed and watched it. His father was in the living room, had a heart attack, and I got called at work. So, I -- I’m there with ya, you know, and I want to see something happen
here. I want to work on this language. I think there’s a component missing from this language because you know quite frankly our society we don’t do enough -0+6+69- we’re -- there’s an aspect of our society that thinks if we do not [Sigh] explain that other people have guns and that things happen at other people’s houses, and what to do when that happens. If we don’t explain that to our children that we’re safer, and I totally disagree, so I expect that to be part of our discussions here today. And, you know, once again, I -- I really feel for your situation, and you know, if ten years ago something was done, you know, perhaps you wouldn’t even be sitting here on this matter. So, thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Representative. Thank you very much. I’m sorry. There is one more now. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, I -- I can’t possibly imagine what you’re going through, and I thank you for coming in and talking about this. We has a legislature always have to consider when horrible things happen if there’s something that we could do to make it better, to change the law to prevent it in the future. And, if so, what? So, one of the things that I think we need to discuss is education, and I -- I would ask you do you know if your son ever had any type of training on how to avoid situations like this?

MIKE SONG: You know, we’ve -- we worked so hard to keep our kids safe from everything from seatbelts to every imaginable thing -- the kind of friends that you have, what you do, what you’re responsibilities are, and there were consequences for our kids not
doing that. But the one thing that I probably spoke to Ethan the most about was about gun safety because I felt like that was something that -- that I would be not with him at the time 'cause we weren’t gun owners, so I felt like I would not be there while he was hiking next to a ledge 'cause I hike with him almost every week. The sad thing about this case is that he did have gun education from the parent in the house where he died. That parent decided that he was going to be Ethan’s secret gun instructor, and when I found that out, I almost fell to my knees because if we -- if education is there, I think it’s fantastic. But I think what’s happening today -- perhaps to your point -- is -- is that a small subset of gun owners are teaching the wrong lesson, and those are the ones that I think we need the education for as much as for the kids because I think if this -- if there was a cardboard box instead of a safe like this, my son would be alive today. So, that’s how I kind of finish every idea that people bring to me, and I would say, yes, better education might have helped my son to be alive today, which is all that I ever really want any more -- just to have him back.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. Thank you for coming in. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there any others? Thank you very much.

REP. SCANLON (98TH): Thank you, Chairs. Appreciate it.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Next, we’ll hear from Christine Cohen, followed by Chief -- followed by -- and Chief Jeff Hutchinson.
CHRISTINE COHEN: Good morning. Happy birthday, Chairman Winfield. I hope it’s a good one for you. I am going to yield my -- my time in a moment to Chief Hutchinson here, but I did want to just state for the record that I am -- I wrote in support of SB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT. Also, quite obviously, HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME, HB 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS, and HB 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF A PISTOL OR REVOLVER IN A MOTOR VEHICLE. Obviously, very focused on HB 7218, which my good colleague, Representative Scanlon, has really you know walked through and done a lot of hard work on.

On January 31, as you just heard, the town of Guilford and surrounding municipalities were shaken to the core. It was the afternoon when a life was taken too soon due to an unsecured gun. We all stood by helplessly as we watched a dear family cope with the loss of their son, a death that could have been prevented if the gun, its keys, and ammunition were not easily accessible in a container. Sadly, this narrative we know is not unusual. The people involved may be different, and perhaps, the details change a bit, but children are dying each day due to access to an unsecured firearm. Countless times, we all turned on the television, read the paper, listened to the radio all to be informed of another life lost due to a gun falling in the hands of an unintended user. We all have. It’s within our power to fix this, and lower the incidents of this needless heartache. HB 7218 will certainly protect families by requiring that guns be properly stored regardless of whether or not they are loaded in a
secure location. So, with that, I will just yield to Chief Hutchinson here.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Thank you, Senator. Good morning. I’d like to thank the Judiciary Committee for the opportunity to speak this morning. I’d also like to thank Senator Christine Cohen for her dedicated service to the citizens of the state of Connecticut, especially those in Guilford, and for her support of the bills I’ll be speaking to this morning. In addition, I’d like to thank Senator Sean Scanlon for his support of these bills and for his service to the residents of the state of Connecticut, particularly Guilford.

Regarding Senate Bill No. 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT, is a common-sense approach to ensuring the safety of police officers and the public. Police officers are faced with difficult decisions every day in the performance of their duties. Their daily interactions with the public require them to balance the interest of public safety with the rights of individuals with whom they’re interacting -- a fact which they are very sensitive to. When a police officer sees an individual carrying a piston or revolver, the ability to determine whether or not that person is legally carrying that firearm is an important element in ensuring the safety of the officer and the public. When individuals are [Bell] carrying a piston or revolver, they’re required by law to carry their permit with them. Allowing a police officer to require that person to purchase their permit will enhance public safety and ensure the integrity of the permitting process.
Regarding House Bill No. 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. This presents an opportunity for the legislature to close a dangerous loophole in the current law. The law is currently written and applied -- limits the criminal liability of an individual to circumstances when they negligently store a loaded firearm. Again, the firearm must be stored loaded for the statute to apply. On its face, this limiting language may seem appropriate; however, it’s anything but appropriate. Consider the reality that firearms are stored unloaded but with a box of ammunition next to it or a loaded magazine or even a single round of ammunition right nearby. The results are devastating when a child finds that firearm and that easily accessible ammunition. It is not at all difficult for them to figure out how to load and discharge that firearm, sometimes intentionally, sometimes unintentionally, and sometimes fatally. House Bill No. 7218, proposes some simple changes including eliminating the limiting word loaded. This simple change will not cost the state money. It’s not an unfunded mandate to municipalities. It does not burden the gun owners of this state with additional costs, and it will not raise taxes. What it will do is require a very small degree of diligence on the part of gun owners to ensure that they do not create a situation where someone may die due to their carelessness. What it will do is hold them criminally liable if they do not properly and safely store their firearms. What it will do is save lives. The best outcome I can imagine by the passing of this bill is that no one is every prosecuted for failing to meet the safe storage standards established by it. My hope is that the small measure of additional effort required by gun
owners within this bill will encourage all of them to understand the responsibility we have as gun owners to respect firearms and to properly and safely store them.

In closing, I started saying that this bill presents an opportunity for the legislature to close a dangerous loophole in the current law. It also presents a much bigger and more important opportunity. House Bill No. 7218 presents the legislature with an opportunity to save lives. Please consider this fact, and consider all of those affected by gun deaths when you make your decisions. I want to thank you again for your service to our state and for the opportunity to speak today.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. I -- I will say this for everyone. That the ding that you hear -- the bell -- applies to not just the general public but to public officials too. If you hear the ding, please try to wrap up -- summarize. I did not stop you because I didn’t say that before you testified. I really would like to get everybody to have the opportunity to testify. So, are there questions or comments from members of the committee? There are -- Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning, Chief, especially. Chief, how long have you been the chief in -- is it Guilford?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Guilford. Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): How long?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Just over four years.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, I would expect that you had some experience in law enforcement prior to there too?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: I’ve been there for just over 29 years.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And -- and during your tenure in law enforcement -- and you know, thank you for your service -- has there ever been an incident where an officer on the Guilford force mistook a -- let’s say a cellphone for a firearm?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Never has been, no.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Certainly, not that I’m aware of, but.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. How many incidents of, you know, where an officer thinks that they see a firearm somebody’s carrying, and it turns out to be something else? Anything in your tenure?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: It’s 29 years, and I haven’t read every report that’s occurred in 29 years, and in my tenure, there’s never been an incident that -- that I’m aware of where they miss -- misinterpreted what someone was carrying. No.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, how am I to prevent -- I mean I have a lot of friends, clients who are police officers, but I know that, you know, there’s a probable cause standard here. You know, the officer has to determine in the field, you know, more than likely there’s a call, you know, at a store somebody’s got a gun, give a description, officer gets it, they see somebody matching that description, don’t necessary see the gun, maybe they
see a bulge. Is that enough for the officer now to stop the individual and ask them for some sort of id?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: AN id for a permit?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): For anything.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Certainly, there’s the standard of reasonable suspicion when we’re talking about Terry stops? Is that what we’re -- is that what we’re on here?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, generally, the scenario is that somebody calls, says you know I’m at Stop&Shop, and I saw somebody with a gun, and you know, they got a black jacket, and they’re about 6 feet tall, and they got white sneakers on. And, officer responds, and sees somebody generally matching that description sees a bulge in their waistband, doesn’t necessarily see the actual firearm, you know. Under this -- this law, does the officer have then the authority to ask that individual for their papers so to speak?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: My understanding under the law as proposed is that the officer needs to see the firearm.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so even if that call is made, the officer -- if this law was to pass, the officer would not be able to ask that person for their papers?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: As I read it.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, you’re here in support of this law, so --

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Right. Yeah.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I would expect that you’re in favor of the language that’s before us.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: I’d prefer it to be actually more flexible in that the officer -- if they have information to do it would be able to, but I’m in support of it as it’s written because that’s how it’s written. So, anything more than what we have now is better than what we have now. It ensures the integrity of that permitting process. People who are permitted and carrying legally are not the people we’re worried about, and should -- and they should have no concern for that because, you know, it’s not -- it’s not illegal to carry a gun if you’re permitted to carry the gun, and that interaction would end pretty quickly if they show their permit. It’s the people that aren’t permitted that we need to be worried about.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure. Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you folks for being here, Senator and Chief. Just a followup on SB 60. I -- I just -- the bill actually is quite simple. It’s removing from the current law that a person carrying a firearm would have to upon request of a law enforcement officer present their permit, and the current law says if there is reasonable suspicion of a crime, and this is removing just that little piece of it. You mentioned Terry stop, so I get that you’re familiar with the -- the notion of a Terry stop, which is most often plays out in stopping a car. Can the police officer pull over a car without a reason?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: No.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): What is the threshold for when they can decide to stop someone?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Delaware versus Prouse identifies when you can stop a car you have to have a reason to stop it whether it’s a visible traffic violation or some other crime that they’ve committed.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right, so it’s the same standard -- reasonable and articulable suspicion of a crime?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Right.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, my understanding of our current laws in that case -- the one that you just mentioned and Terry v. Ohio is that this is designed to protect our 4th Amendment right that a law enforcement officer cannot stop someone without a reason. I mean you can ask anyone anything. Let’s just clear that up. A police officer can walk up to anyone and ask them for identification; is that correct?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Correct.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): It’s -- this is about whether or not the police officer has the right to detain someone and demand that they produce their driver’s license or in this case a pistol permit. So, I’m just trying to understand since driving a car is a perfectly lawful activity and carrying a firearm is a perfectly lawful activity, what is the difference that would say that someone has less rights to be carrying their firearm, which is a lawful activity, than driving a car in which they can be detained by law enforcement?
CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: I would not interpret this as reducing their rights. What I would interpret it as confirming their rights to do it. So, they have a right to carry a permit -- to carry a firearm if they’re permitted in the state of Connecticut, and it’s just confirming that.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right, but I mean it’s the same -- you could say the same about someone driving a car, which is much less of a right. I mean your right to self defense is a natural right protected by our constitution in the 2nd Amendment, and because of that, we don’t pull people over to confirm they have a driver’s license, so I don’t know if I understand the metaphor.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: I think there’s a difference in, unfortunately, the climate today is such that, you know, there’s a lot of people that are very comfortable with a firearm, the presence of a firearm, the carrying of a firearm, and I think what this calls for certainly in this state, in this climate in the country is if someone sees a firearm, if a police officer sees a firearm, a firearm is an inherently dangerous instrument. It’s depending on whose hands it’s in, and [Background conversing] -- and it’s -- it’s important for --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Excuse me. Excuse me.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Yeah.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We are going to try not to have the audience react whether positively or negatively to either the questioner or those being questioned. Thank you.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: As I was saying, the climate suggests this environment today that police officers
have a responsibility. We spend millions of dollars in public money, private money. If you see something, say something, and it’s kind of a farce for a police officer to show up, investigate something that they might or might not find to be illegal. They’ll never know unless they can find that -- they can produce that permit for them. When the permit’s produced, the interaction’s over. It’s not a long detention. It’s a matter of seconds.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Yeah, I certainly appreciate the situations that have occurred in the state that have occurred that -- that lead us to this -- this point where this bill is proposed year after year, and I’m sympathetic. I know some of the police officers involved. I’ve talked to them. My experience tells me that the issue is really a question of training. Personally, I believe that there is something that reaches reasonable suspicion. That’s when an officer has the right to pull over a car, and that should be the same standard no matter whether someone’s mowing their lawn or carrying a baseball bat or even a bottle of bleach. All inherently dangerous to use your terms and certainly, an automobile can be inherently dangerous also. The thing about all those things is that none of those are -- are constitute protection of rights either, so I think the standards should be even higher. So, I guess what I’m asking is -- and I’m very sympathetic to this because I can imagine being a police officer and being called to a scene or witnessing someone carrying a firearm, and having a natural concern about what to do about it. The thing is that I don’t think that that natural concern exists normally, and when it does exist, I believe that is reasonable suspicion. In other
words, if someone was walking outside of a store back and forth, they were acting in a way that they were casing the place or something of that nature; does that meet the reasonable suspicion standard for you?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: I think, unfortunately, what you face is not necessarily always the officer’s perceptions. We get called to things that people would be surprised about every day that concern other people that might not concern us, but we have a responsibility to investigate when someone calls something in, and if we show up -- and I’ll give you an example. We’ve had several in the past. We have a fair every year in town and a huge parade with thousands of people there, and we’ve had individuals openly carrying at those fairs, and people get concerned. Some of the people there with their kids, some of the people who aren’t familiar or aren’t comfortable with guns would call us and say, excuse me officer, that gentleman has a gun. And, your point about training. We’ve trained our officers very carefully in making sure that we’re not violating the rights of gun owners when we do that, so in the past, what we’ve done is approach that person and said, excuse me, I know you’re carrying a gun, you know, there’s -- there’s some concerns from people. Someone called up and said they’re concerned about it. Do you have a permit? Just curious. You don’t -- we know you don’t have to show it to us, but if you have one, it would be great, and then we’ll move on and I can let them know this is no big deal, and those interactions have ended well. So, your point of training is to make sure that the officers understand the rights of those people carrying those guns. It’s not a
takedown. It’s not we’re gonna take them and check their permit. It’s a perfectly cordial interaction requesting to see the permit, and I think that more often protects the rights of those gun owners and those gun carriers than it does violate them. It gives them an opportunity to then move on without the suspicion of doing anything illegal.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I don’t -- I don’t want to keep you before us all day, but there are -- and I certainly don’t disagree with much of what you said, and that’s what I’ve heard from law enforcement also is that in general this is not a problem, that police interacting with someone who is carrying a firearm typically they voluntarily offer their permit. It’s the thing is that this law -- this proposed bill that’s before us essentially would violate the rights of gun owners if passed -- in my opinion -- because it takes away their 4th Amendment right by saying that they demand -- they have to produce it on demand, which you would not do in a similar situation for the automobile as -- as an example. Again, I appreciate you being here. I guess -- I guess what my final question for you is -- -- I think we’re in agreement about what the constitution says about due process, and that people have a constitutional right not to be detained without a reason. Are you -- is your testimony essentially that that is okay as long as we’re talking about gun owners who are carrying a firearm?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: My testimony is that if this law passes then it will be okay.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, you don’t see a constitutional challenge?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: I do not.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions or comments from other members of the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. I very much appreciate it. Our constitutional rights are there not for the everyday transaction but to prevent abuses, and this law has the possibility of opening it up to abuses, whether intentional or not. Have you ever heard of an incident where somebody was shot by police, and the police said, I thought he had a gun?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Absolutely.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, in many instances, there was no gun.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): What is to prevent under this law somebody who does not like guns reporting that they see somebody with a gun and insisting that the police go and defend -- detain them and demand to see a permit?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: It goes right back to the language of the -- of the bill and the point that Representative made about training. It’s important to train the officers what they can and cannot do. Under this bill, if an officer observes the gun, that’s when they can ask for the permit. Sometimes we have to tell people when they complain of something if we haven’t seen it -- it’s the same as an example of the car stop that you talked about. If an anonymous or any other person makes a call and
says, hey this car is driving erratically. Generally, what the officers are required to do is go observe that vehicle and see if they see it operating erratically before they stop it. So, there’s a level beyond what the call -- for the caller states for the officers to be properly trained and educated and make sure that before they initiate any sort of potential detention that there’s a reason to do that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but as we said, there are many instance where a police officer thinks they see a gun, so there could certainly be a incident where somebody calls it in, says there’s a man with a gun in Walmart -- in the Walmart parking lot. Officer responds. What’s the officer doing? He’s responding to call of a man with a gun. His blood pressure is up. His senses are heightened. This guy might have a gun. Guy turns around, sees a bulge, he might think he sees a gun. The -- our constitutional rights are designed specifically for those situations where we can’t open it up for those abuses because that man may have been called just because he didn’t belong in that neighborhood. What’s to prevent that? What’s to prevent every person who sees as certain person who looks a certain way in a certain neighborhood who happens to be exercising their 2nd Amendment rights from having people call and say, that guy’s got a gun, he shouldn’t be here, go get him. Wouldn’t this open it up to that?

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: I don’t think it does. I think you -- you’ve -- your description of several different scenarios kind of mixes them all up. If someone says I see a man with a gun, and an officer sees a man with a gun, they’ll have the authority to
at least request whether he’s properly carrying that gun by seeing their permit, and I would think that those lawful gun owners and lawful permitted owners would prefer that they were the only ones carrying those guns and not the people that don’t have permits are carrying guns. So, it’s just our responsibility to affirm that and acknowledge it, and I don’t think, you know, the term abuses as related to the description of an officer responding to a -- to a call -- that’s a bit presumptuous to suggest that officers are responding and intending to abuse the constitution or the right to the people that they’re protecting.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): No. It’s not the -- it’s not the officers that I -- I believe will have the -- will do the abuse.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: [Crosstalk] Which -- which brings me --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): [Crosstalk] Others may disagree with me, but I think the officers will --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): One second. One second. I’m going to ask both of you to wait until the other one is finished before you respond.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Sure.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): That way we can all hear you. Okay.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I -- I don’t believe the officers will -- will abuse this. I know others will disagree with me, but I don’t think that officers will knowingly abuse this statute in violation of the 4th Amendment. However, I think it opens up to the public the opportunity to be
punitive against other people because they’re doing something in a place where they don’t think it should be done even though it’s perfectly legal. So, a man walking down the street in a neighborhood that some people thing he doesn’t belong -- what is to prevent every other person on the street from calling the police and saying there’s a man with a gun here, he shouldn’t be here, and the police will respond. He walks to the next town, crosses town line, they call the police in that town. It just opens it up to abuses that our constitutional rights were designed to prevent.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: There’s nothing to prevent that. In fact, there’s nothing to prevent that right now, and I don’t think this law will change the mindset of the public to call when they see somebody either legitimately they think’s suspicious or if you believe they might be abusing, you know, the law as it is because they don’t like the way someone looks. There’s nothing right now that prevents that. All this does is if a call is made and an officer shows up and sees a weapon that they can act on it and ensure that in fact that person’s rights are preserved.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): The difference is though that, as you referred to Senator Sampson, once that call is made under this law, they will now have an obligation to come and investigate and to detain that person, and if the public knows that every time they make a phone call the police now have an obligation to go harass this guy, it could perpetuate this type of thing. That’s my opinion. Thank you for coming in.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Thank you.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions or comments from other members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

CHIEF JEFF HUTCHINSON: Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We will next hear from Mayor Joe Ganim, and Chief Perez.

MAYOR GANIM: With permission of the Chairs and the committee, can Carolyn Vermont join us as well?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): She may --

MAYOR GANIM: I know there’s a time limit, and --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you.

MAYOR GANIM: We’re gonna be very quick, and respect everyone’s time. Carolyn. Okay. And, we’ll be quick. It will just be the Chief and I. And, to the Chairs, thank you very much for the opportunity at least briefly to join you along with Carolyn Vermont who not only works in the Mayor’s office but is a community leader, and on a biweekly basis convenes communities leaders, religious leaders on the issues of violence in -- in our city, and our Chief of Police, Chief Perez who has had the challenge of day in and day out not only overseeing the police department but trying to ensure that every neighborhood in the city is safe. We’re asking for this committee at least to hear us briefly in support of a number of the bills that are before you, but specifically, in the terms that they have been phrased both regards to ghost guns, safe storage, I think particularly certainly an open carry as well when we’ve had incidents, which Chief
can share with you, and numbers in which ghost guns have been taken off the streets, so they do exist in our state, in our city. I believe as well safe storage would go a long way, and one more -- one more way in which we can be a safer city for Bridgeport and a safer state for Connecticut and continue to lead the way I think on common sense gun laws. I’m gonna make it short and turn it over to the Chief, but I just want to say two more things. On -- on a local level, we have passed -- on an ordinance level -- local level an ordinance that would at least put a civil fine in place for -- for some of these measures, but we don’t have the tools, as you know in the Connecticut law, to really have an impact. We’re asking this legislature, this committee to vote these bills out with a healthy debate on the floor, and hopefully to continue to make Connecticut a leader as best we can in the areas of common-sense gun laws. These challenges are as recent for us as last night with another shooting, another homicide in our city. We don’t have the answers. We’re doing everything we can, and partnering with not only community leaders but every level of law enforcement in order to try to meet these challenges. But at the end of the day, it’s a partnership for the state of Connecticut by legislators with common-sense gun laws that will add one more level for Chief Perez to try and do his job to try and make our city as safe as we can.

I would like to say that I think safe storage bill in any ways -- as you’ve heard and we’ll hear from other mothers -- is a safe child bill as well. A lot of this is broken down more recently to young people with access to guns, using guns, and as a result, being the victim of gun violence. Clinton
Howell who is a 12-year-old -- a 12-year-old in our city who was a victim of a homicide in the city of Bridgeport. The three individuals that were a part of that were young people -- were juveniles. If I’m right, Chief --

CHIEF PEREZ: Yeah.

MAYOR GANIM: Ages 12, ages 14, and ages 16.

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

MAYOR GANIM: And, the one who was the principal of the homicide was 18 years old. So, not only do you have the death and the loss of a 12-year-old by the name of Clinton Howell, you have three juveniles where are charged with accessory to murder, and an 18-year-old who -- now, you have four additional lives as a result of the access ability -- over accessibility and abundance of illegal guns. I’m going to turn it over to Chief Perez before the bell rings. Thank you, Senator.

CHIEF PEREZ: Sure. I’ll be really quick, but I just want to thank you. And, I want to echo the comments that Chief Hutchinson expressed, and I feel the same way. So far this year in our city, January, February, March -- right -- three months, over 100 guns seized off the streets, and some of those guns, rounds, magazines to which carry up to 50 rounds. What happened last night -- these kids --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Chief, if you can finish the thought, and then I’m sure there are plenty of questions that will probably tease out most of what you want to say.
CHIEF PEREZ: Sure. No -- no problem. Let me just state that the ghost guns we did recover three fully automatic weapons off the streets, but we got to have it.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and Mayor, Carolyn, Chief, thank you all for being up here and for your continued advocacy on these issues. I know, Chief, you were -- you were one of the first people on the open carry issue to -- to flag this and raise this as a concern, and I think you were probably one of the first people in the state of Connecticut who started to talk about it and -- and realize that something had to be done, primarily arising out of an incident that happened at the Subway sandwich shop in downtown Bridgeport. And, for folks who haven’t sort of heard that story and heard sort of why this bill is important and what the incident is, if you could just quickly summarize that incident, which is just one example of numerous similar instances around the state where folks have openly carried a firearm into a -- into a crowded establishment and has led to concern?

CHIEF PEREZ: Sure. You know the city of Bridgeport is an urban environment, so you have downtown Bridgeport has a Subway shop, and a gentleman walked in and he had a handgun strapped to his waist. The -- the clerk -- the clerk says, hey, you have a gun. Yeah, yeah, I do have a gun, and he’s sort of like challenging the store clerk. They called the police -- I’m going kind of quick. They called the police. The police shows up -- do you have a permit for that, sir? You don’t have the right to ask me. Am I breaking the law? And, it just went back and
forth, back and forth. Eventually, a more larger police officer showed up, and Dontrell Brown [phonetic] was led out of the store, but he was doing it just to challenge -- to create -- to create a problem, to create something that -- that was -- that shouldn’t have been there, and he did have a permit. All he had to do was yes, sir, I do have a permit to carry my gun, here you go. Thank you very much, and he would have been out of the store -- in and out.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, this is at lunchtime, Subway sandwich shop is across the street from the courthouse --

CHIEF PEREZ: Yeah.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Folks are coming in, out to grab a sandwich from jury duty or what have you?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yeah.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. What -- we’ve heard concerns in the past that you know this bill could lead to -- I think it was teased out a little earlier -- lead to some additional stops or stops and frisks or run counter to the 4th Amendment; do you have thoughts on that?

CHIEF PEREZ: I feel that the previous Chief, Hutchinson, so eloquently stated that, you know, you’re not doing anything wrong, and -- and you go back to the driver’s license kind of thing -- but listen, if -- I’ve been carrying all my life, you know. If I choose to carry outside, you know, and people can see that I do have a gun on me, and police officer I think he has the right to challenge me, to say, excuse me, sir, do you have a permit?
Yes, sir. May I see it? Here you go. Thank you, sir, have a great day. End of story. You’re not detaining the guy. You’re not -- you’re not violating any -- any civil rights. You’re protecting those rights of other individuals that are around that individual -- okay. They may be afraid. They may be scared. They may be alarmed. We live in a society where anything can happen at any time, you know, and I don’t have to tell you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Chief, on ghost guns, I know one of the things we heard last year when we heard this bill is well it’s not an issue, they’re not on our streets, they’re not out there, they’re you know it’s -- it’s a trumped up feel-good bill because they’re just aren’t -- people aren’t doing this. They’re not ordering ghost guns off the kit, ghost guns online, and having them shipped to the house. They’re not manufacturing them to get around our -- our background check and registration requirement.

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Do you have a comment on that?

CHIEF PEREZ: Absolutely. So, this year -- last year, we bought a ghost gun off the street -- ATF and our detective bureau working very diligently. We were able to figure out who was manufacturing the -- the weapons, and we ended up recovering three, and right now, it’s a -- it’s an open investigation, so I really can’t go into it. But yeah, they’re real. They’re out there. They have no markings -- none whatsoever, and they go for something like $3000 dollars, you can get yourself a nice AR-15 or an AK-47.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Without passing a background check and without a serial number on it?

CHIEF PEREZ: Absolutely.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, those are on the streets of Bridgeport?

CHIEF PEREZ: Absolutely. We’ve got three.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Chief, you talked about already this year -- we’re only in March -- recovering ten -- 100 guns -- about 100 guns of the streets of Bridgeport.

CHIEF PEREZ: Over.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I think we’re at seven homicides already in the city of Bridgeport this part of the year. Where are those guns coming from?

CHIEF PEREZ: Most of those guns are coming from down South. Yeah, some of those guns are stolen here in Connecticut too and tri-state area, but most of those guns come from places like Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, you know, Tennessee, and we’re getting a lot of guns. There’s just too many guns on the street. We can’t keep up with it. Over 100 guns in three months.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right.

CHIEF PEREZ: That is -- we can’t have that.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right. So, it’s two primary -- primary drivers of that. It’s guns that are coming in from down South, kind of -- unfortunately, there’s not a whole heck of a lot this legislature can do about it. That’s just an abject failure of Congress to take on the issue of gun safety and pass sensible gun legislation at the
federal level, but on the stolen gun issue, which you referenced as one of the other places these guns are coming from; are they being stolen out of homes, cars, where are they being stolen from?

CHIEF PEREZ: Believe it or not -- and, you know, it’s kind of hard to believe -- but a lot of them come from cars. People will leave their car unlocked, and they’ll leave a loaded weapon in the seats, in the glove compartment, underneath the seat, and I can -- and I can back it up because I have the reports, so I’m not just saying that. I have reports of people reporting that they have lost their weapons. What we normally do is we take their piston permit, and we send it back to the state of Connecticut, and let the state police handle it, you know, either revoke it or not. It’s -- it’s -- it’s inconceivable that you leave a loaded weapon in -- in your vehicle.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right. And, if there is a requirement that -- that weapon be secured, that it be locked in a safe, do you think it would cut down on the number of thefts and stolen firearms?

CHIEF PEREZ: Without a doubt.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Thank you, Chief.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you for being here, Chief, Mr. Mayor, ma’am. Nice to see you folks. It sounds to me like from your testimony that most of the conversation is about illegal firearms. Would you say that -- maybe give me a rough percentage of like how many crimes are committed with illegally
obtained firearms versus someone who is a lawful gun owner, you know, committing a robbery or a murder.

CHIEF PEREZ: The numbers are off the chart. I mean you can’t compare. You know, it’s watermelons to apples. I don’t know.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): So, it’s almost all illegal guns. Are you familiar with the statewide firearms trafficking task force?

CHIEF PEREZ: Not really.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Yeah, it’s -- it’s a program that existed right after Sandy Hook. It was passed as part of the comprehensive gun control that was passed at that time. It was one of the things that I appreciated very much. It was funded at a million dollars, but what’s shocking about it it was only funded for one year, and I’ve actually talked to some officers from various towns across the state that participated in that, and they said it was very helpful for getting illegal firearms off our streets, it allowed police departments to work together as far as gang activity and that kind of thing. I have actually tried to put that bill in many, many times. In fact, I put an amendment in last year in this committee, and sadly, it failed because of the cost. But would you think that that would be a positive to -- to reinstate that program to help get illegal gun trafficking -- you know, and crack down on that?

CHIEF PEREZ: Anything that we can do to get illegal guns off the streets of Connecticut, I’m with it.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I appreciate that. So, and you know I’m very sympathetic. I can’t even imagine being a Bridgeport cop. That’s got to be a very
difficult job and stressful every day, and I
certainly respect what you said, and my colleague,
Representative Dubitsky, already mentioned this, and
I share his opinion that I don’t believe police
officers have any intent to go hassle people or
they’re going to abuse their authority in any way,
but nonetheless, we have a constitution and that’s --
that’s the objection that some of us have to this
SB 60, not to mention that the racial profiling
aspect of it. I think that if there was a situation
where law enforcement is now put in a position where
they have to respond to every call -- someone
carrying a firearm -- they’re going to do it, and it
can be used by other members of the public to
disrupt things. If they just don’t like that
someone carries in a certain location, they can
continually call and make law enforcement show up
and ask someone. In the Subway situation we talked
-- talked about earlier, was the gentleman -- and I
know there’s a video out there. I haven’t seen it
since it happened. It was a few years ago -- but
was that gentleman doing anything prior to being
engaged by the store clerk?

CHIEF PEREZ: I don’t believe so. I believe that
what -- I believe the store clerk thought that he
was going to be robbed, that there was going to be
some kind of a crime being committed, you know, and
he was alarmed, and that’s why he called the police.

When it became clear that the -- the person was not
going to rob the store, either the clerk became
aware of that when he realized that it was perfectly
lawful for him to be carrying a firearm or when the
first officers on the scene shown up; shouldn’t that
have been the end of the situation? I don’t know why it was allowed to escalate.

CHIEF PEREZ: It should have been. We did not want it to escalate. Dontrell Brown wanted it to escalate. He’s the one -- he was calling the shots. He was challenging the police officers. He would not -- all he had to say is, yeah, I have a pistol permit, and I have it right here in my hand.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I understand.

CHIEF PEREZ: Yeah, that would have been the end of that.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Yeah, so then the thing is that he did have a pistol permit.

CHIEF PEREZ: Yeah.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, he did not commit a crime.

CHIEF PEREZ: Nope.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Did he ever commit a crime?

CHIEF PEREZ: No, not that I -- well, maybe a little bit of disorderly conduct when he engaged the police officers, but we -- we took the high road on that one. Okay. We took the high road on that one.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Understood. Understood, but you can -- you can understand why some people might look at that situation and say that this person was minding their own business, the same as if they were driving down the street or if they were mowing their lawn, and someone called and said, this guy is mowing his lawn, you need to go over there and talk to him. I know that’s a ridiculous argument, but there’s nothing illegal about carrying
a firearm and there’s nothing illegal about mowing your lawn. That’s my point -- is that if you are just minding your business, and you’re doing something that is not a crime, why -- why would law enforcement need to show up for that purpose?

CHIEF PEREZ: Well, you know, a lawnmower doesn’t shoot bullets, but a gun does. [Laughter]. And -- and so what --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Excuse me. Chief --

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I’m -- I’m going to remind the audience that we are trying to hear the testimony. When people are responding in the audience, it actually makes it difficult to hear their testimony, so we would ask you to refrain from doing so. You may continue.

CHIEF PEREZ: Thank you, sir. So, when somebody carries a handgun -- an AR-15, an AK-47, a shotgun, okay, and -- it -- it alarms people. It scares people. Okay. You -- you got -- you got terrorists out there. You got people who do not deserve to carry these weapons because they do not have a license. Dontrell Brown did have a permit, but what he was doing -- he was purposely challenging the officers, creating --

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): But I mean between you and me -- I mean my recollection is that he was simply stating that the officers did not have a right to ask him for his permit because he was minding his own business and not breaking any laws.

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes. You keep saying that.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I -- I understand that you consider that to be escalation, and I guess that’s why we’re here today is to determine whether or not Dontrell Brown was correct or not. Whether or not he was not violating any laws and he did not deserve to be detained by law enforcement, and this law attempts to change that. Although between you and me, Chief, I don’t think that passing this law makes any difference whatsoever because I don’t think the state of Connecticut has the power to override the constitution, and I think that the same exact circumstance will occur whether this happens or not because if it was me, I would exercise my 4th Amendment right and explain to the law -- to the law enforcement that I’m not breaking any laws, you don’t have the right to detain me, and the Connecticut law doesn’t matter when I have my constitutional rights. So, I think that’s -- that’s a concern is whether or not we actually have the power to do this even if we wanted to, and just your personal opinion -- and I’m really trying to get to the heart of this because I want to solve this issue once and for all, so I don’t have to see this bill come back year after year and argue about the constitution -- is there a point at which reasonable suspicion is correct? In other words, that’s the standard for pulling over a car. You can’t just do it because you know you want to pull someone over. You have to have a reason. It doesn’t even have to be a very important reason, but it’s got to be a reason, nonetheless. If the -- the store clerk at Subway had called and said, there’s a guy carrying a gun but he’s acting suspiciously; would that have been enough to maybe satisfy that reasonable suspicion requirement when the officers showed up?
CHIEF PEREZ: [Sigh]. Yeah, I think so, and [Sigh].

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. Well, that’s my point.

CHIEF PEREZ: But here’s the thing -- here’s the thing. What Dontrell was doing he was doing it on purpose to challenge law enforcement. He could have walked three blocks down the street, okay, and he could have been in Green Homes Apartment, and over there, they saw Dontrell carrying that gun, those kids that are over there -- they wouldn’t have asked him if he had a pistol permit. They would have taken out their own guns, okay, and they would have taken the life from him one way or the other, so there’s a big difference, okay. Maybe -- maybe I’m not making a little bit of sense there, but let me tell you police officers who responded on that day acted with tremendous, tremendous, tremendous discretion. All right. They didn’t violate his rights even though he -- Dontrell -- was trying to violate theirs. All right, so yeah.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): How as he attempting to violate their rights? And, again, I -- I really don’t want to debate this with you. I just [Crosstalk].

CHIEF PEREZ: No, no, not at all. You know how? Because he failed to show his -- his pistol permit -- his legit pistol permit. All he had to do is go in his wallet, and give them the permit. He was egging them on.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Do you object to private gun ownership by folks that have satisfied the requirements in the state?

CHIEF PEREZ: Not at all. I own many guns myself.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Understood. Okay. And, that’s good. I appreciate that very much. Thank you much, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good morning. So, Chief, you had mentioned people carrying AR-15s and shotguns.

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): This has nothing to do with that. You would agree with me? Because I mean if I’m walking down the street carrying an AR-15 and you walk up to -- are you directing your officers to ask me for a pistol permit?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes. I have asked. Why not. I had a guy walking down Boston Avenue -- [Crosstalk].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, under what -- what portion of the law allows me with a pistol permit to carry an AR?

CHIEF PEREZ: None.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so why would it even be relevant? You know, I’m -- [Crosstalk].

CHIEF PEREZ: I was trying to make a point. That’s all.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, I asked you is that what your officers are being taught, and -- and -- to do. If they see someone walking down the street with an AR, to ask them for a pistol permit?

CHIEF PEREZ: They ask them for id, okay, and most of the time they -- they arrest them -- take them to
the ground. They arrest them. They bring them in. ATF is summoned, and then we go from there.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so this law has nothing to do with that?

CHIEF PEREZ: No.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. I -- I -- [Crosstalk].

CHIEF PEREZ: I was trying to make a point. That’s all.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, I -- okay, I didn’t understand the point quite frankly.

CHIEF PEREZ: Okay.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): But we’ll -- we’ll go on from there. In the Subway incident, I’m trying to understand was this individual in some way threatening to the person at the sandwich shop? I haven’t seen the video, so -- and I didn’t hear that portion of it, so --

CHIEF PEREZ: Good.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): All I heard was somebody walks into a sandwich shop, there’s a gun in a holster, never left the holster, and the sandwich shop person recognizes the gun, and the person who has the firearm says, yes, I have a firearm or I have a gun. Is -- is that what I’m to understand led to the call to the police, please?

MAYOR GANIM: I’m just gonna say -- I just want to -- Representative, there is a video. I’ve seen it a number of times. I actually use it as a -- as a -- as a tool in a class that I teach at a university, but it’d be helpful, I think on this instance in particular, and Chief can comment certainly as well
as to what he saw and what I saw on it. You should look at it. It’s -- it’s engaging certainly, and it makes the point about certainly rights to carry and permits and all that, but it also I think there’s a feel in that Subway in downtown on that day, as Representative Stafstrom pointed out, probably that there was a feeling of -- this was at the very least and I’m not sure this is a legal test -- it was uncomfortable. It’s a rather larger -- I’m not sure what kind of gun it is, but it’s very visible, so it’s not a .22 and it’s not kind of hidden away kind of thing. It’s kind of there, and then you have -- if I could -- maybe not to your point, but one that is concerning to a -- a city who has limited resources and manpower -- you end up with maybe because of ambiguity, clearly. Hopefully, it can be cleared up with the passage of this in ease of policing in all of our environments ‘cause certainly, I care about the city. You have three or four officers summoned to a scene; manpower committed there in a dialogue that goes on for a period of time over this. All we want is the best relationship that we can create between law enforcement and the community. Those that are legally certainly entitled to carry a permit under the law, and certainly, we want to distinguish those from those who are not entitled to carry guns that we have too many of certainly in our city. So, I guess what I’m trying to do is encourage you to look at the video for a description, and if the Chief wants to comment on the description, he can certainly do that as well.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure. Well, I’ve -- I’ve heard a lot about what happened that incident that day, and I’m just trying to ascertain by what would
make those representations, so I asked about the -- and perhaps I’ll get an opportunity to look at the video after this, but we’re not gonna show it on the screen ‘cause I’d like to answer my -- ask my questions now.

MAYOR GANIM: Yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, I’m -- I’m trying to figure out ‘cause you expressively said that the sandwich shop person was concerned that they might be robbed.

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, based upon the facts as presented, what gave that perception? The mere presence of a firearm that was never unholstered?

CHIEF PEREZ: The mere fact that he’s been robbed like 25 times over the last couple of years.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

CHIEF PEREZ: And, when he saw the guy come in with a gun, he wasn’t gonna wait for the guy to pull out the gun and say, give me your money. When normally they give it to them ‘cause Subway has got that policy.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

CHIEF PEREZ: But you know, he got scared.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Oh, I understand, and you know, people do get scared. I’m just trying to you know -- so it’s his prior conduct with other individuals that perhaps gave that thought to call the police, and I would expect in those prior incidents that the firearm was actually drawn out of the holster and was a little bit different; yes?
CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yes. Okay, and the individual who is carrying in the Subway -- my understanding is they were African American?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. What is your department’s position with regard to investigation of a crime and the presentation of a pistol permit? Is your department authorized to retain that permit if they believe that a crime has been committed?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes. We follow the law. We follow the Connecticut state police rules and regulations.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I believe the procedure that the state police have set up is you’re supposed to make a recommendation as far as the -- the revocation that you don’t have the authority to retain that pistol permit.

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, it’s a little bit different. I asked you about the investigation of a crime, if the police officer had reason to believe that a crime had been committed, ask for the pistol permit whether or not it’s standard operating procedure of the Bridgeport Police Department to retain that pistol permit?

CHIEF PEREZ: It depends on the incident. I -- you got to be a little bit more clear. What is it -- you go through --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): What is your standard operating procedure?

CHIEF PEREZ: We --
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, we know so somebody’s going to investigate a domestic.

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, you know wife says he’s got guns. Because it’s usually one of the standard questions; right? And, the officer asks the individual, you know, your wife says you got some firearms. Do you have a pistol permit? And, he says yes. Well, can I see it, the officer says. And, as a result of their investigation, the officer determines that there’s probable cause for some sort of domestic arrest. Is it standard operating procedure of your department to retain that pistol permit?

CHIEF PEREZ: Not only do we retain the pistol permit, but we take all the guns that are in the house.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so if the same incident was to happen on the street, is it standard operating procedure for your department to retain the pistol permit.

CHIEF PEREZ: We pull the motor vehicle over, and let’s say the operator of the vehicle -- we’ll say put his hands on the steering wheel and says, yes, officer I have a firearm, and I’m legally -- I can carry it legally. Yeah, we ask him for the pistol permit.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yes, but the question was about retention of that pistol.

CHIEF PEREZ: No. No. We don’t.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You never?
CHIEF PEREZ: No. Not at that. That’s different.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): In the investigation of a crime outside of the home?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct. If it’s a -- if it’s a motor vehicle and the operator is cooperating with the police, and he’s telling you --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yes. There’s more than -- yes.

CHIEF PEREZ: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, a domestic in a park --

CHIEF PEREZ: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Let’s say.

CHIEF PEREZ: Okay.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, pistol permit is presented because the person is lawfully carrying.

CHIEF PEREZ: Is it domestic?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): It’s a domestic. Yes.

CHIEF PEREZ: Absolutely. We take your pistol permit.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You retain the pistol permit?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yep.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Even though it’s presented?

CHIEF PEREZ: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): The ghost gun situation. You had said 50-round magazines that some were recovered?
CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Were all of those registered?

CHIEF PEREZ: No.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so those 50-round magazines mere possession of them is illegal anyway?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, is there some law that you’re testifying here on today that would prevent that from occurring? I’m just trying to figure out in the context of your testimony.

CHIEF PEREZ: I’m saying that those 50-round magazines are coming from down south. They’re in Bridgeport. We have recovered some. There’s still some out there. The incident that took place last night we believe one of those round -- 50-round magazines was used.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, but there’s no law that we’re talking about here today because we have no jurisdiction over the South --

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): That would help you with that situation?

CHIEF PEREZ: No.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. The -- the ghost guns themselves -- I think I heard your testimony correct that there were three fully auto ghost guns that you recovered or retained?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, and I think you talked about manufacturing in Connecticut. Is it someone -- it’s an open investigation -- got it -- who’s manufacturing these firearms for transfer? Isn’t it true that currently under the law as it exists, that conduct is illegal?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, how does -- how would the ghost gun law that is before us stop those situations that you’ve told us about?

CHIEF PEREZ: It would -- it would prevent or give us some more -- I want to say teeth -- to bite on -- onto people who engage in this type of behavior. You can buy -- you can legally buy a receiver. It’s a piece of metal. All right. But if you know what to do with that, you can create an AR-15, AK-47, and then you can sell it on the street, and -- and it’s not the good citizens that are going to go buy the guns. These guns have been bought by nefarious people -- drug dealers. People who kill you and eat your lunch while your wife is watching. This is what we’re trying to prevent. This is not --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Shoot cops.

CHIEF PEREZ: Shoot cops. Absolutely.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I got it. I know. But I’m just trying to figure out because that activity is presently illegal, so let me give you an example.

CHIEF PEREZ: Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I have a client who’s a preeminent cardiologist, and you know, works with his hands, very intricate, you know, doing surgeries, and as a hobby, he builds guns.
CHIEF PEREZ: Okay.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): For his own use.

CHIEF PEREZ: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): He builds some very extravagant beautiful firearms. They’re all ghost guns under this law. He’s a lawful — law-abiding person, has a pistol permit, all that stuff. How do I help him with this ‘cause he’s got a — if he goes to sell it, sure it needs some sort of serial number, some sort of identification, and he’s never sold any of them? But with this law the way I read it; is he would have to — his hobby would be curtailed. Is there — can you educate me in that area?

CHIEF PEREZ: I think you already gave us the answer to your question. You know, he keeps them to himself; correct?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yes.

CHIEF PEREZ: He doesn’t sell them, so.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): ‘Cause that would be illegal.

CHIEF PEREZ: Yep. [Crosstalk].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): It’s presently illegal.

CHIEF PEREZ: But that’s the thing, you know, the — the ones that we’re trying to prevent are those who are selling them. They have the materials, and they’ll sell it. It’s not like the good abiding friend, doctor of yours. It’s the bad guy that’s making these guns and making them available to — to bad people — for lack of a better word.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, that’s presently illegal.

CHIEF PEREZ: Absolutely.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, I’m just trying -- and I don’t want to belabor the point. I’m just trying to figure out how this bill -- because even somebody who imports a ghost gun kit, if they are an ineligible person, once that thing becomes a firearm, they’re in violation of federal law. That’s a five-year felony. So, how does this law -- and we’ve spent a lot of time. We have staff working on this language, and I’d like to do something that helps you, but I don’t see that -- you know funding the firearms trafficking task force would probably help you. But I don’t see how this law helps you. Can you please explain to me?

CHIEF PEREZ: It helps -- it helps me -- it helps me to keep my -- the people -- the good people who live in the city of Bridgeport safe. Okay. It helps me keep kids safe in schools. It -- it prevents someone from building this -- this rifle, okay, that can shoot the .223 round that will go through a bullet-proof vest, right, or go into a school, and -- and -- and God forbid what happened in Utah, you know. That’s how that helps me.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, it prevents one who is a felon from building a gun?

CHIEF PEREZ: I didn’t say he was a felon. He could be a fairly pretty intelligent guy in order to build that. You got to know what you’re doing ‘cause see if you don’t that things gonna explode on you.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure. So, it would prevent a -- a one who’s not a prohibited person from building a gun is basically what you’re saying?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yeah, it will prevent someone to build -- to build this type of weapon and then go out and sell it.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, no. ‘Cause the sale is illegal. It’s already illegal. This doesn’t change that. It’s -- it’s already illegal, so the construction for personal use -- are you concerned about that or are you concerned about the transfer, which is already illegal? I’m just trying to figure out because this has nothing to do with the sale. This has to -- [Crosstalk].

CHIEF PEREZ: It does have to do with the sale.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Do with the manufacturer.

CHIEF PEREZ: Well, the manufacture or the sale.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I’m going to cut in. I don’t -- I don’t do this all the time, but I’m not sure we’re making progress here. I understand what you’re trying to do, but I’m gonna ask you if you’re okay with it to move a little forward in your questioning.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah, I’m just -- understood. Got it. Thank you. I think that was. Yes. That’s it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Representative. Representative Dubitsky.

CHIEF PEREZ: [Sigh] He’s gonna kill me too.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you for coming in. I appreciate your
taking our questions. I wanted to go back to the show your permit bill that you had mentioned earlier that the store owner or the store clerk became alarmed because he saw an African American with a gun.

CHIEF PEREZ: That’s not what I said.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. The gentleman was African American?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes. He was.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, he was carrying a gun?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes. He was.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, the store clerk was concerned he was going to be robbed?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

CHIEF PEREZ: He was black too.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Now, how many officers responded?

CHIEF PEREZ: I think in the beginning there was just one officer who responded.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

CHIEF PEREZ: And, he’s engaging Dontrell, and he’s asking him, hey, sir, may I see your -- I see you’re carrying this pistol, and do you have a permit for that? Yes. I do. May I see it? No. You can’t. And, it just went back and forth, back and forth.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so initially, there was one. And, then how many?
CHIEF PEREZ: I think two others including a sergeant.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I just looked at the video. It looks to me from the cellphone video like there were four officers.

CHIEF PEREZ: Could have been. I haven’t seen it in a while.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, the first three to respond it seemed to me were white.

CHIEF PEREZ: I remember one who was white, and then I don’t remember any others, but a black sergeant who’s about 6’ 5”, 300 pounds.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yep, and he was the last one to show up. Right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, he was the one that diffused the situation?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, initially, what you had was you had an alarmed clerk who thought they were going to be robbed by somebody who wasn’t doing anything wrong, who wasn’t doing anything illegal, wasn’t exhibiting any suspicious behavior. Right?

CHIEF PEREZ: I don’t know that. You’re gonna have to ask the clerk. The clerk was the one that called the police. He was alarmed.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): There was no report of him doing anything that would tend to have a police officer thing there was a reasonable articulable suspicion of a crime.
CHIEF PEREZ: I wasn’t there. I can’t tell you. All I know is the clerk called the police, okay. ‘Cause he was afraid that he was going to be robbed. The police responded, and encountered an armed individual. They asked, sir, do you have a pistol permit? Yes. I do. Sir, may I see your pistol permit? No. You can’t. And, then it went on from there.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, can a police officer just walk up to somebody on the street -- anybody -- without any type of suspicion of anything and demand they see ID?

CHIEF PEREZ: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, that person has rights to walk on the street without being detained by the police.

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, unless that person has -- is exhibiting some type of behavior that gives an officer reasonably articulable suspicion that that person was engaged in a crime, the police officer can’t detain them.

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Can’t demand to see ID.

CHIEF PEREZ: Right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, that’s constitutional law 101, right?

CHIEF PEREZ: All day long. [Laughter].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, that applies to everybody regardless of race, regardless of
neighborhood, regardless of whether they walk into a sandwich shop or not, right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, carrying a firearm is perfectly legal if you have a permit, right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, there are other things that alarm people that people do. Let’s say you’re wearing a fur coat, and you go into a -- into a place -- into a -- let’s say a health food store where they’re all vegans, and they don’t like animals being killed. That could certainly alarm the people in the store; couldn’t it?

CHIEF PEREZ: I -- it would not alarm me, but yeah, sure. absolutely.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, you’re a police officer. You understand the law, and just seeing somebody walking down the street carrying a firearm wouldn’t alarm you; would it?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes. It would.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): That alarms you to see somebody walking down the street --

CHIEF PEREZ: In Bridgeport?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Legally carrying a firearm.

CHIEF PEREZ: In Bridgeport, Connecticut? [Laughter]. You got to be kidding me, right? [Laughter]. Sir --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): No, sir, I’m not kidding.

CHIEF PEREZ: Well --
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I’m -- I’m

CHIEF PEREZ: C’mon, you’re -- you’re asking a question that -- yeah, it would alarm me. It definitely would alarm me. I as the chief of police will go up to that person and say, excuse me sir, do you have a permit to carry that firearm?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so -- so Bridgeport needs to be different than everywhere else in the country where it’s perfectly legal to walk down the street carrying a firearm?

CHIEF PEREZ: No. That’s not what I -- that’s not what I’m saying. What I’m saying --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so -- so --

CHIEF PEREZ: You know what I’m saying.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Going back -- going back to my scenario with walking into a store -- going into a health food store, a vegan store wearing a fur coat, and the store clerk is alarmed and frightened and feels unsafe because you’re wearing a dead animal [Laughter], and they call the police. The police -- the police can’t come and demand to see ID; can they?

CHIEF PEREZ: They can respond to a call, okay. It’s a call for service. The police will respond, and they will ascertain as to what’s going on. Why did you call the police? You called the police because they’re wearing a fur coat? Sir, may I see some ID -- you know. That’s perfectly standard.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Perfectly legitimate you ask, but what if -- what if the person says no?
CHIEF PEREZ: Well, it depends. If -- if the -- well, there’s no violation of the law, right?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Correct.

CHIEF PEREZ: Other than the clerk feels threatened by this person.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Correct.

CHIEF PEREZ: Sir, you don’t want to show me ID? Okay, no problem. Do you want him in your store? No. I don’t. Sir, you gotta leave, and that will be the end of that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And -- and, that’s exactly what happens in the Subway store incident, right? They -- they asked the -- they asked for ID. The person said, no, and the police asked him to leave, and they left peacefully. That’s what happened, right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Towards the end, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Sounds to me like this is a -- this is a solution without a problem. The person has not committed any crimes, has no articulable suspicion of a crime just like the lady wearing a fur coat. You can’t demand under penalty of law for their ID.

CHIEF PEREZ: A fur coat’s not gonna shoot you and kill you. [Laughter]. A 9 mm will.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So -- okay, so that’s where you draw the line on the constitution?

CHIEF PEREZ: It’s public safety 101.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): No, but it’s constitution 101; isn’t it?
CHIEF PEREZ: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): You just told me it was.

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

 SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative -- Representative Dubitsky. Representative, I appreciate your asking questions, but the -- can we just stick to the questions and not debating?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. Would it be the same with a knife?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so knives aren’t in this law.

CHIEF PEREZ: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. People carry knives all the time perfectly legally; don’t they?

CHIEF PEREZ: It depends on the size of the knife.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

CHIEF PEREZ: If it’s over four inches, no. I have every right to -- to -- you can’t walk around with a butcher knife attached to your belt, you know, down the street. No. It’s gonna create a public -- public fear. People are gonna -- c’mon.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so if you have a knife that’s folded, and it’s sticking out of your pocket, you have no idea how long it is; right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes. I do. It depends. If it’s this big and it’s gonna be unfolded, it’s gonna be that big.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): No. If you just see the top of the knife sticking out of your pocket, right. All you see is a little clip with a little piece of knife sticking out you have no idea if it’s six inches long or two inches long. Right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, in that instance, should you be able to demand to see ID for the person?

CHIEF PEREZ: Not unless you’re doing something wrong.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, that -- and that knife could well be illegal; right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Could be.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, that -- and you have probably a lot more stabbings or at least as many stabbings in Bridgeport as -- as there are shootings. Certainly, there are in the country.

CHIEF PEREZ: Oh, no. Incorrect.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, nationwide there are a lot more people get killed with knives than guns; right?

CHIEF PEREZ: I don’t -- I don’t think so. I don’t know. I don’t think so. [Background conversing].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, there’ll be testimony later on that issue.

CHIEF PEREZ: Okay.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, you are you know same with any type of weapon that what you’re -- what you are -- what you’re supporting opens the door to allow all types of encounters with people who are
doing nothing wrong in violation of the very constitutional rights that you just said bind the police. And, I thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Representative. Are there questions? Representative Smith.

REP. SMITH (108TH): Good morning, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, and good day, sir. Just a few questions. I’m not as knowledgeable about the weapons laws, but I know one of the concerns that some of the folks have who have these legal permits is what happens to the permit if they’re stopped and detained, and some of the questions started drilling down on that issue. And, just one of the concerns I have in terms of if you went to the Subway shop and the police went to the Subway shop and determined there was some type of suspicion -- reasonable suspicion that the person may be in the process of committing a crime or stepping towards that direction; would you have the right then to ask the question about show me your permit?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yes.

REP. SMITH (108TH): And, let’s assume they show their permit, and you determine you know what I believe this person was about to commit a crime, and I’m fearful that unless I take the weapon a crime will be committed; do you have the right at that point to cease the weapon?

CHIEF PEREZ: I gotta have probable cause to believe that. Because I’m gonna arrest them. If that happens -- if I take his gun, I’m gonna arrest him, and I’m gonna have to, you know.
REP. SMITH (108TH): So, without probable cause you’re not able to take his weapon?

CHIEF PEREZ: Right.

REP. SMITH (108TH): Okay. Are you able to take his weapon if -- I’m sorry -- are you able to take his permit without probable cause?

CHIEF PEREZ: No.

REP. SMITH (108TH): So, it’s the same standard either way?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. SMITH (108TH): And, let’s assume just again with the Subway shop incident -- let’s assume that the police did not exercise the discretion that they did that day, and they arrested him for breach of peace because there was a scene now being created in the Subway shop, and you -- the officers felt it was a breach of peace situation. At that point, would they be able to cease his weapon and his permit?

CHIEF PEREZ: If there was breach of peace -- if there was a crime committed? Yes. That day that particular issue that -- that took place -- I thought my officers handled it very well. ‘Cause if not, probably Dontrell Brown would have sued us, and who knows maybe he could have got money from us. I don’t know. All I know is that they did a great job, and -- and diffused a situation that’s being propelled by Mr. Brown.

REP. SMITH (108TH): I would agree. I mean I would agree with the fact that the incident never became really more than a constitutional question. I commend your officers on that.
CHIEF PEREZ: Thank you.

REP. SMITH (108TH): Because it could have gotten much worse -- much worse either way, either through the individual or through the police had they exercised poor judgement. So, congratulations to them. I guess the concern that I’m hearing this morning from some of my colleagues is -- and I hear your concern as well. Your concern is safety as I understand you. You see someone with a weapon, you want to make sure the folks around him or her are safe, and the concerns by some of my colleagues are that we have a constitution that says unless you’re doing something illegal or unless there’s reasonable -- reasonable suspicion that you’re doing something illegal, the police have no right to stop you, and this committee is struggling with that fine line of how do we address that because we have law-abiding constitutional exercising individuals who are doing nothing wrong who are being stopped by the police -- could be stopped by the police --

CHIEF PEREZ: Could, yeah.

REP. SMITH (108TH): Under this law.

CHIEF PEREZ: Right.

REP. SMITH (108TH): So, I’m not sure if you have any magic ideas that could help us with that?

CHIEF PEREZ: [Sigh] I just think that in speaking for my city, you know, an urban environment -- Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury, you know, Meriden, Connecticut -- you know if you’re not alarmed -- if you’re a police officer and you’re not alarmed when you see someone with -- with a gun -- it could be a rifle, it could be anything -- it could be a handgun, okay. If you’re not alarmed, there’s
something wrong, okay. And, what we’re trying to --
to do here or what I believe is that there’s nothing
wrong for a police officer in asking a law-abiding
citizen who has the right to possess a firearm for
his pistol permit. You -- you choose to carry that
weapon out in public, then -- then there’s nothing
wrong for -- it should not be a problem with a
police officer ask for that permit. He’s gonna keep
you for one second, so look at it. Yeah, AJs got a
permit. Here you go, AJ. See you later. End of
story. It’s -- where’s the problem?

REP. SMITH (108TH): All right, listen. I can
understand where you’re coming from. It’s a simple
request, I guess. Where does it go from there is
the -- is the question?

CHIEF PEREZ: Correct.

REP. SMITH (108TH): I think some of our folks are
concerned with you know we have the Terry stop, and
-- and you’re well familiar with that in terms of
police not just being able to stop folks randomly
saying I want to see your ID or I need to see some
identification. Why are you out at two o’clock in
the morning walking down the street? Well, maybe
they want to go for a walk. The police have no
right to stop that person at that point with or
without a weapon unless there is some suspicion that
a crime was being committed or about to be
committed. So, the concern is where does it go if
the police are allowed to stop and ask for ID?
What’s the next step? How far does the constitution
become eroded at that point? Now, I understand both
sides. I certainly understand your side as the
police officer with somebody with a weapon walking
down the street. You’re concerned, and I don’t
think it has to be Bridgeport. It can be anywhere. If you see somebody with a weapon, and you’re not sure why they have that weapon -- a pistol. I understand the concern, and I guess the juggling act we have to do here on this committee is find out if there’s a way within the four corners of the constitution we can allow that -- for you to feel safe and be able to ask folks for an ID or a permit under those circumstances. So, I think the Mayor was looking to say something.

MAYOR GANIM: I was just going to say thank you. Thank you for giving us the opportunity, and hopefully, we’ve added some value. certainly, the police chief more maybe than I in your discussion -- your debate, and hopefully, the collective wisdom of this committee will balance all those and come out with hopefully what is the best result. I think the perspective we wanted to bring -- I think especially for the Chief -- was at least from his and our collective perspective hopefully it adds some value to your deliberations and knowledge, and we appreciate the opportunity to do that.

REP. SMITH (108TH): All right. Well, thank you, and I have no further questions. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Representative Smith. Before Senator Bradley, there’s starting to be people collecting in and out. There’s an overflow room. We cannot have you filling the aisles through, so if you cannot find a seat, I would ask you to please make your way to the overflow room, which is 2D. Senator Bradley.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Mr. Chairman. Thank you, gentlemen and Ms. Vermont, for being here this
morning. I know it’s a trek to come up from Bridgeport, and it’s much appreciated. I know how hectic your schedules are, especially in light of the fact that we just had a shooting -- two -- over this past weekend that resulted -- I think -- in a fatality on maybe both -- both occasions, and Chief, I’m gonna direct my question to you because I think you are the expert in some of these matters. I just -- I just want to first clarify, Chief, you’re not a constitutional professor, you’re not an attorney, so your many accolades that you have you don’t have sophistication when it comes to understanding how the constitution works on a daily basis, but what you do have a lot of expertise -- and you correct me if I’m wrong -- is in policing. You’ve been doing that for a significant amount of years; is that correct?

CHIEF PEREZ: You are correct. I’ve been doing it for 36 years.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): And, part of your role as a police officer and now as the Chief of Police of Bridgeport is handling things like gang units, and I think you’ve maybe run departments at specifically targeting gang units and things of that nature; is that correct?

CHIEF PEREZ: That’s correct.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): And -- and is it accurate, Chief, in your assessment and your knowledge -- I do criminal defense on the other side -- that often times before a gang member or someone who has a permit -- who doesn’t have a permit to carry a weapon, what they often times do before they use it is they brandish the weapon; is that correct?
CHIEF PEREZ: That is correct.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): And, often times they brandish the weapons multiple times before they use that; is that correct?

CHIEF PEREZ: That is correct.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): And, the way the law operates now just because someone brandished the weapon -- didn’t say anything threatening, didn’t specifically say they were gonna use it -- if they just simply brandish the weapon, you couldn’t stop that person as the law reads today; is that correct?

CHIEF PEREZ: You are correct.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): And -- and I know you’re not a constitutional officer, and there’s a lot of things like stop and frisk and a lot of determination that happened to the constitution that you’re probably not privy with. But would you say it is wrong for you just to simply without any probable cause stop and frisk or harass somebody because they’re simply walking down the street?

CHIEF PEREZ: You are correct.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): That’s wrong; right?

CHIEF PEREZ: That’s wrong.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): You wouldn’t -- you wouldn’t give an order like that to your officers -- [Crosstalk].

CHIEF PEREZ: No, no, not at all.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): If someone looks suspicious or someone looks of a certain race or ethnicity, you should stop and frisk that person; right?
SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): And, the reason why you’re proponent of this particular piece of legislation is because it’s not saying that; is that correct?

CHIEF PEREZ: You’re right.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): It’s saying if a person visibly shows a firearm that in those circumstances you can ask them if they have a permit for that weapon; is that correct?

CHIEF PEREZ: That is correct.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): So, if the -- if the law were to read, if this proposed piece of legislation were to say you can just stop anybody who looks like they might have -- you see a bulge in their pants or something, and say, let me see if they have a gun and let me stop and frisk them; you wouldn’t be supportive of that would you?

CHIEF PEREZ: No. I would not.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Okay. Now, let’s -- let’s bring it a little bit more deeper to home and talk about what’s happening in America today, especially in our great city of Bridgeport. You know of instance that Clinton Howell, a 12-year-old boy who was gunned down and killed who a lot of times before incidents like that happened, again, people are brandishing, showing off that they have a pistol in their hands or some sort of firearm -- wouldn’t it have been helpful for you as a police officer with I think probably more than 30 years of experience of being a police officer -- if you had law that would enable you, that if somebody showed a video or somebody said, hey this guy brandished the weapon,
didn’t threaten me with it, but I’m -- I’m curious as to what’s going on -- if you see something like that happen, wouldn’t it have been helpful for you to save lives if you had this piece of legislation in effect?

CHIEF PEREZ: All day long.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Can you imagine incidents like let’s say -- and I’m not saying this to be trite and I’m not saying this to be diminishing of tragedy that we’ve had in the state, but in an instance like Sandy Hook, which is radically different than Bridgeport in terms of their economic makeup, in terms of the community that they live in, wouldn’t you think it’d be helpful for a suburban police officer if they see a young man with a rifle in his hands, not threatening anybody, not using it in any type of aggressive way, if they can say, hey young man, do you have a permit for that gun or you know, ask them a line of questions to see exactly what -- whether or not to save the lives of those young people that passed away in Sandy Hook?

CHIEF PEREZ: Absolutely.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Yeah, so -- so what you’re asking here for is often times they criticize cities like Bridgeport, often time, Mayor, you get the brunt of the blame of to what you’re not doing. What you’re asking from us here as legislators is that we empower you not to stop people who are lawful people who are carrying firearms because if you have a permit then go about your way. Right?

CHIEF PEREZ: Yeah.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): If you -- if you did everything the right way, there’s no consequences,
but what we’re saying is that if you -- if you don’t have that permit, then maybe we can prevent the loss of another life.

CHIEF PEREZ: That is -- that is correct. You hit it right on the head. That’s -- that’s all we’re trying to do. We try to keep people safe.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): All right. Thank you. Thank you very much for being up here.

CHIEF PEREZ: Thank you very much.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, forgive me for going for a second time. I just -- I can’t keep my mouth shut after that last little exchange. I really can’t. Respectfully to my colleague and -- and to you folks here, what was just discussed is not in keeping with the current law. Certainly, brandishing a weapon is a crime. I think it actually rises beyond reasonable suspicion. Any law enforcement officer can certainly stop someone in that case. This is about someone who is not breaking any laws. We acknowledged that. This is about someone who is lawfully carrying a firearm. That’s what this bill proposes to do -- to stop someone who is not breaking any laws whatsoever, who is lawfully carrying a firearm. It would give law enforcement the right to stop that person and detain them to ask for identification. Any parallel to someone who is brandishing a weapon or being threatening in any way is incorrect. Law enforcement absolutely that would be reasonable suspicion to be able to detain anyone or probably prosecute them. I just wanted to get that on the
record because that line of questioning was -- was not accurate. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Are there other members of the committee who have questions or comments? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much.

CHIEF PEREZ: Mr. Chairman, thank you very much. Members of the committee, we are -- we very much appreciate the opportunity. We will -- thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We are well beyond the first hour now, and we will begin with the public list. We’ll start with Kalani Rivera and her mother, Kate Rivera. While they’re getting set up, I’m gonna ask a question. Is Sofia Munoz in the audience? Okay. You may begin.

KALANI RIVERA: Hi, my name is Kalani Rivera.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): You have to turn the microphone on. You have to hit the -- there you go.

KALANI RIVERA: Hi, my name is Kalani Rivera and I’m 10 years old from Bridgeport, Connecticut. I am testifying against ghost guns because I think they are harmful to everybody that’s around them. These guns are untrackable, requiring no background check, and no serial number. Also, if you went to jail already for having a gun illegally or have committed a crime with a gun, you can still purchase a ghost gun. You also have easy access to them, especially the 3D printed guns. Even if -- even if we pass HB 7218, the safety storage at home bill won’t apply to ghost guns because they have no serial number to track the stolen gun.
Also, you -- also, you can not detect 3D -- 3D printed guns with a metal detector. Ghost guns evade our law because they don’t need a serial number or a background check to purchase them. This matters to me because these guns can harm people easily inside of my community. That’s all. Thank you for your time. I hope you make a good decision.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you.

KALANI RIVERA: I cease this time to my mom.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): [Laughing].

KATE RIVERA: Hi, my name is Kate Rivera, a resident of Bridgeport, and my 14-year-old son was shot in the head and stomach a week after graduating 8th grade. So, obviously, this -- this is an issue that is very close to our heart. My son is safe, so I just want to let everyone know that. He is okay after a very long recovery, but having ghost guns, which -- which is an issue that’s going on in our city, we’ve seen a ghost gun increase, and the fact that someone could order a gun online and put the rest of it together like a Lego set is really disturbing, and then be able to sell that. And, then 3D printers -- I mean we have 3D printers at our high schools, right, and those guns would not pop up with a metal detector. They wouldn’t pop up out here at a metal detector, and -- or at the airport. So, you know, it is my hope that this -- that this will pass, and I do have one concern about the vehicle storage gun bill and just that that would disproportionately impact urban youth, and so I just want to -- I want you to keep that in your heads when you’re creating that law, and -- and the repercussions to it.
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Kalani, great job. Are there questions from members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for coming to testify before us today. You did an awesome job. Will next hear from one more member of the public before jumping back to the elected officials list. That is Dr. Walter Kupson.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Good morning. Thank you very much. Does this need to be on or should it be off? Okay. I’m Dr. Walter Kupson from Middlebury. I’ve been a piston permit holder since 2007. I’m also a member of the Executive Committee of the Connecticut Citizen’s Defense League, and I am a NRA certified pistol instructor, but I’m also a father, I’m a husband, I’m a physician, and a lawful gun owner, and as such, I am obsessed with storing my firearms securely. I actually believe in many different layers of protection. However, I wish to testify in opposition to HB 7218, so you might ask how might I possibly be opposed to this piece of legislation? Let’s be clear mandating safe storage of guns I think is quite appropriate. I’m a proponent of that. That’s what I do. However, I would pause it that it would be more impactful to cover this -- to couple this with a mandated firearm safety curriculum in our public schools, so Section 10-18b of the general statute states that the State Board of Education and the Connecticut Police Chief’s Association may develop curriculum guides to help local and regional boards of education in developing firearm safety programs. My understanding is this bill is 30 years old, and to my knowledge, it’s never been implemented. Now, the NRA has a safety curriculum for children, so does the National
Shooting Sports Foundation. I am proposing that gun safety could be made a component of the health curriculum. I’m not an educator. I don’t know public school budgets, but it could be a component of the school of the health curriculum, alongside instruction on safe sex, pregnancy prevention, vaping, bullying, and substance abuse. Let’s be clear this is not a suggestion to teach children how to handle firearms, it’s teaching them about the dangers of firearms. This measure would focus on education and prevention. I would fully support this bill if it was accompanied by a mandated gun safety curriculum in school. My support of this would also be bolstered to include a tax break for gun safes that would further incentivize gun owners to purchase safes.

My only other final thought about safes and secure containers is while they may seem a very good idea, and they’re almost foolproof for younger children, you have to consider their limitations, okay. One could go on to Youtube and see many different hacks for opening some of them. None of them requiring any kind of specialized or expensive tools. And, increasingly, all children -- not just adolescents but a child of any age could reference these videos, so no doubt safes and locked containers would lower the risks, but please understand -- just consider that the risk is not zero. Safes coupled with firearm safety education would earn my support. [Bell].

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Great timing. Are there questions from members of the committee? Representative Smith, followed by Senator Sampson.
REP. SMITH (108TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming up and testifying. I figured I ask you a question. You didn’t deal with the permit gun bill that’s before us this morning that just took up the first part of the committee’s time, but I’m just wondering how you would feel if this bill were to become law where such that if you were carrying a pistol that was open and an officer saw it would have then the right to come up and ask you for identification?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: So, regarding Senate Bill 60, personally, I don’t open carry. However, it does apply to me in the sense that if some were to see that I was -- what we call printing or suspected that I have one -- I do very much believe in my 4th Amendment rights.

REP. SMITH (108TH): So, you would --

DR. WALTER KUPSON: I would -- I would be in opposition to Senate Bill 60, as I testified I believe it was two years ago.

REP. SMITH (108TH): All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you for being here. While you mentioned that you would like to see an education component as part of the safe storage bill, and I’m very much in agreement with you there. Do you have an example of -- of what that curriculum might be or how extensive it is?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: As far as how extensive, no I do not know, but I cited the -- the NRA at an Eagle
program. The National Shooting Sports Foundation has a program as well. Even just looking at the most basic tenants of the NRA, the four rules of firearm safety, something as simple as that could possibly be taught.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): All right. Are you aware of the cost associated with the -- at Eagle -- I mean not the cost? The time it takes to teach it. I mean what is the curriculum? Is it something that happens in -- in one class, or is it multiple steps?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: I’m not aware of those details.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Okay. Yeah. I was just looking on their website. I didn’t figure it out right away, but it looks like the components of their training is essentially to train young children to stop, don’t touch, run away, tell a grownup. I think that that’s the -- the basis and essence of what they are attempting as far as education goes, and I think that’s -- that’s a great plan.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: I certainly think it would take less time than discussing bullying or vaping or other issues. I would -- I wouldn’t think it would take any longer than that, and would probably take a much shorter amount of time.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Just a final -- a final question. Why do you own firearms?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: I own firearms for several reasons -- for -- certainly, for recreation but most importantly for personal protection and because it is my -- it is my given right, my natural right that this being a firearm owner has also taken me down the road of learning more and more about not only
our U.S. Constitution but how we got to our U.S. Constitution, so specifically everything including the American Revolution and before the Revolution, so all of the writings of -- of John Adams, and even folks who proceeded John Adams has gotten me really deep into our natural born rights as -- as human beings.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, you believe that self-protection is one of those natural born rights?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Absolutely.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, the constitution is there for the purpose of ensuring that we all maintain that. So, based on that I mean do you feel that there is a risk just living in society today?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: I think there has always been a risk living in any society anytime.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. Do you -- can you think of any examples where you feel like it is you’re happy that you have the right to defend yourself if necessary?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Sure. So, there are many instances of home invasions that occur sometimes at night, often times during the day when a criminal thinks that the home is not occupied. Any trip into a convenient store or a liquor store. When I walk into a liquor store, I’m not scared, I’m not paranoid, but I walk in and before I fully step into this room or this business, I have my eyes and ears open. Am I walking into something? Because let’s face it, those types of what we call transitional spaces are quite apt to be scenes of violence, and I want to make sure that I’m being safe whether I have my firearm with me or not.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, so what do you say to people that would say, well that’s why we have the police?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Well, one of the other things -- not to give you my -- my curriculum vitae, but I am also trained in the ALICE Training Program. Okay, which talks -- which is a response taught many times to schools to counteract a shooter, and I’m not gonna go into that, but the point is one of the things that’s been made very, very clear both through that training and through any of the statistics I’ve read is -- and the byline is when seconds count the police are minutes away, not to diminish law enforcement. My own brother was a law enforcement officer. I have a great deal of respect for law enforcement, but they can’t be everywhere. I would also bear out the FBI data regarding active shooters that indicates that legally properly trained citizens are the best quickest defense.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Very good. Thank you very much for being here and for those answers. And, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Questions or comments from other members of the committee? Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you for coming in today. I’m probably one of the only people here that actually taught the -- an Eagle gun safety program in school. In fact, I was officer friendly, and the D.A.R.E. officer for many years, and for an entire half year, we brought it in to demonstrate it and see what would happen. Not one of the children in the class decided to go out and buy guns. It was a you see it, don’t touch it because you know as
safe as we are in our homes our kids go visit friends. Our kids go other places, and no matter how safe we can be, we just don’t know what our kids are going to come across -- going to a park. As a policeman, we pick guns up at parks. We pick guns up at -- and most of the time these are stolen guns. These are not legal guns, and this is what you know our criminals get a hold of, and I agree with you. The world isn’t safe, and it does take time for police to get there, and the more rural you live, the longer it takes. If the police are 20 minutes away, which in some cases especially because our state police is -- is cut back so much right now, it could take 20 minutes or longer. It doesn’t matter if you go Code 3 or not. It could take a long time to get there, and it’s up to you to defend your home until -- until help arrives, so you know, I agree with you that an education of some sorts is important, and I also agree with you that you know I just read through what you provided. I don’t believe that you know stopping somebody and asking to see their -- their permit -- I don’t think that’s right as U.S. citizens. If somebody brandishes a firearm, pulls it out, you know, then, yeah, you have probable cause to stop them, ask them who they are, what they’re doing, and stuff like that. So, I thank you for coming in today and testifying.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Senator. Other members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Representative -- Senator Bradley.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you. Doctor, thank you very much for coming in, and thank you very much for offering what appears to me to be very sensible
suggestion of how we can improve this particular piece of proposed legislation. I come from a military background. I come from a military home. We had weapons in our home, and I understand that teaching kids about gun safety at a very young age is one of the best things you can ever do to prevent a lot of incidents that we've been discussing here. And, I -- and I know you’re a doctor, and I kind of want to make this analogy and see if you can follow it with me. Part of the Hippocratic oath is do no harm, right? That’s one of the -- one of the oaths that you take as a physician. There’s -- there’s a lot of things that are being suggested here, and I know you’re not a constitutional expert, so I don’t want to put you -- put you to task as to what the constitution says, but do you see here anything that would harm people’s rights or do you see ways that we could possibly enhance and protect lives?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Are you referring specifically to Senate Bill 60?

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): I think that you came specifically to testify about House Bill -- what was it? The 7223, right?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: 7223, yes.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): That’s -- I guess I’ll just keep it specifically to that, but if you want to elaborate and go into other bills, then your opinion is valid.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: 7223 is fine. So, your -- your question was in terms of reducing harm?

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Yes. Right.
DR. WALTER KUPSON: So, again, speaking personally. When I saw this bill, do I keep a loaded firearm in my vehicle? Of course not. I don’t. Do I keep an unloaded firearm in my automobile? No. I don’t. Personally, in terms of this, in terms of harm, so anyone who would leave a loaded firearm in their -- their vehicle unlocked -- I’m sorry that is not how I would do things. If you’re asking specifically about 7223, it has its own little issues in terms of a firearm owner, in terms of being responsible, and the burden it puts upon responsible firearm owners driving to and from the range.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Okay. I think it’s important because what -- what I’m hearing from you, doctor, is ways in which we can kind of enhance protections and make sure people are both educated and firearms are stored in an effective way, and where police officers are empowered but don’t infringe upon our constitutional rights. So, I -- I think -- I think it’s an important piece of the testimony that I’m understanding from you today.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Yes, and actually, you know in -- in many ways 7223 and -- and Senate Bill 60 do intersect because if you look at the issues that we have with 7223, if I were to decide to disarm and render my firearm safe, clear, and they decide that I need to follow the law and put it into a safe in my trunk, well that firearm may be seen, and so by dovetailing Senate Bill 60, I could be questioned as to what I was doing when in fact I was not doing any harm and actually following the law.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Thank you. I appreciate your testimony.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Blumenthal.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you for testifying. Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, thank you for testifying today, doctor. I just had a couple questions. So, I know you testified that you see 4th Amendment problems with Senate Bill 60, but I was wondering with the other bill. So, it’s not your position that there are any constitutional problems with House Bill 7218, THE ACT CONCERNING SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. That’s not your position, right?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Correct. I’m not a constitutional scholar or expert, but no, I don’t see any issues with 7218.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, it’s not your position that there are any constitutional problems with House Bill 7223, which is the one concerning storage of a pistol or revolver in a motor vehicle?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Again, I’m not a constitutional expert, but I don’t see any.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, it’s not your position that there’s any constitutional problem with House Bill 7219, THE ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS; correct?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Correct.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Questions or comments from other members of the committee? Representative Hill.

REP. HILL (17TH): Thank you. Good afternoon. I just wanted to thank you for your comments about the mandatory education side of this. I’m a former Board of Education chair, and I would wholeheartedly
support the idea of education in the classroom regarding gun safety. We are a gun-owning home. My daughters learned to shoot when they were in their early teens. They know how to care for their firearms. They hunt with their father. It’s an important part of his culture that he has shared with him, but I understand that other children that they have grown up with have not learned any of the safety -- critical safety needs, and so I would really support that, and you can tell I’m a little emotional about this. This is an important topic, and I really would wholeheartedly support the education piece to this, so thank you.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Representative. Are there others? I’m seeing none. Yes.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: May I -- may I just one -- I know I’ve gone well over my three minutes. I appreciate your time. I think it’s important to mention something that happened earlier today. That a member of a group that spouses no violence actually had made a threat in this very room, and I think that’s important too for everyone to understand.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Tim Ackert. One second, Representative. Representative -- sir, there is a question. Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. My apologies to keep you. I just wanted to know
whether or not you wanted to elaborate on your last comment any further?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Yes. There was -- I happened to witness a text that threatened a member of this Judiciary Committee with violence.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): If you wouldn’t mind if -- if you can, I’d like to then have a conversation with you, and maybe we can engage the Capitol Police in something along those lines?

DR. WALTER KUPSON: That has already been done, and it’s already been handled, but --

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Then, thank you. I appreciate for bringing that to our attention.

DR. WALTER KUPSON: Thank you.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. [Applause]. Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Good afternoon, Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, Representative Blumenthal, Senator Kissel, and Representative Rebimbas, and other members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Tim Ackert. I represent the 8th District, which includes Columbia, Coventry, Tolland, and Vernon, and thank you for the opportunity to appear to speak on -- I submitted testimony on several bills, which is online, but I did want to touch base on two in particular. One that came to my attention, and I submitted a similar piece of legislation -- the ACT CONCERNING REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES, and my concerns on that is that gun owners primarily understand that there is, you know, each state has
different regulations in terms of gun regulations, and I could imagine having to know those -- if they’re transferring from state-to-state, you know, and hopefully, they understanding that each state has different regulations, but to imagine that they would then have to think of consideration of you know every one of our municipalities also. Unless they were in some ways specifically specified, and I wouldn’t know how they would do that, so I’m concerned on that legislation, and -- and wouldn’t support the legislation as written. To say, you know, that we have state laws, let’s all follow the state laws and regulations, so that’s comments, and I would be happy to take my comments on that one.

But the other one I want to do is I want to completely support -- it’s almost like the doctor and I have the same testimony on -- on 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. I believe a positive addition to this legislation would be an educational component being available to our school systems. Just this weekend, I had my grandson over, and he’s six, and we were playing, and he’s got a little toy -- it was a sword, and he’s showing me his ninja moves, and I said, watch that young man. You know, it’s plastic but grandma and grandpa have so much stuff we don’t want broken, and you’re little three-year-old niece is nearby, so watch yourself. I then took that opportunity to kind of not just talk about sharp objects, but also say, you know, -- you know, if you come across a household that has a firearm in it, what would you do? And, he paused because we haven’t had that conversation. I didn’t have that conversation with my kids because I didn’t have firearms in my home, and I should have because my -- my -- my nephews
hunt all the time, and they have more firearms around than they know what to do with, and so I took that opportunity to talk to him at that point, and I referred to a program. I think one of the legislators asked -- but Project Kid Safe -- actually Project Child Safe actually has great programs that are downloadable and accessibly, so it’s a non-cost issue, but I think it’s an opportunity possibly in our youth in their early ages that young folks get a chance to learn about truly [Bell] safe things, so I will -- those are the two I wanted to focus on. There’s a number of them, but I’m open to any questions, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there any questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, thanks for coming in. I wanted to focus specifically on the -- on the first bill you mentioned with regard to having municipalities regulate firearms. I -- I can only imagine what it would be like if you had in a small state like Connecticut -- 169 different types of gun regulations. Could you explain to me how that would be a problem?

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Well, I just -- because the bill came out and I got some people contacting me from my local community asking me why I would support this legislation, and they said, well -- they said because don’t you know, Representative, that we have ordinances in our community, and I go, how would I know that? And, they paused, and they said, yeah, how would you know that? I said, well, explain what the ordinances are. Well, you know in our local
parks you can’t bring in a firearm. I said, explain which parks it is, and they named the parks. And, I said, is the same park that we always have our Veteran’s Day event and we have a 21-gun salute, is this also the same park that we actually have a gun shooting training program? They said, yes. I said, are you aware that we have those programs in our parks? And, they’re actually live rounds of -- and they said -- I said, so and how would I know that? I would I know that that’s got a regulation, so without any type of signage or postings or anything, and then they paused. They had no answer. And, I actually said, well we rent rooms. We rent these buildings out, and I said, well must be posted in the room rent, so if you rent out the building to have a party, they must be there. There’s nothing, so that’s the concern I have that somebody that not knowing and in our park we have a big a big fireworks display, and I’m sure that there probably are some folks there that self -- that carry for self-protection, and they wouldn’t have any idea, so that’s the concern I have that somebody would have that opportunity to not be well posted and not be well promoted, so you know, I think that people understand and should support our -- our state gun laws, but to have it individually that’s a struggle that I have.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions or comments from other members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your time.

REP. ACKERT (8TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We’ll next hear from David Shute. Thank you -- yeah. Button. There you go. All right.

DAVID SHUTE: There you go. Happy birthday. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen of the committee. This is my first time doing this, so I’m a little bit nervous. Please, bear with me. My name’s Dave Shute. I live in Suffield, Connecticut. I’m here today to urge you to oppose several laws, support a couple, and amend one. I’m a firearms instructor with USCCA. I’m a gun collector. I’m a very positive role model for my family and my country. I’m very concerned with firearm safety. I’m an outdoorsman, but I can see the unintended consequences to some of these bills. I would urge you to oppose SB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT, for the reasons the other witnesses spoke earlier, so I won’t go into that. Just -- I just want to, you know, ensure that our 4th Amendment rights are protected in that case, so that’s basically the point I wanted to make. I urge you to oppose HB 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS. Again, to me, it’s about the unintended consequences. I plan to retire shortly, a couple years from now, and I plan on making some guns. I want to be able to exercise that right. It interests me, and it’s something I like to do as a hobby. You know, with the guns that I do have, I don’t, you know, manufacture currently, but I like to, you know, clean them and maintain them and stuff like that. And, I’m just concerned that would limit me. Criminals are not taking the time to manufacture guns. The ghost guns that we talk about -- the 3D ghost guns, you can’t get them anywhere without a magazine and the ammo. That’s gonna be
detected. They’re not making plastic guns with plastic bullets with plastic primers with plastic gunpowder as far as I know.

I would ask you to oppose the act of 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF A FIREARM, for several reasons. My main concern is the safety of it. In the event the motor vehicle was to crash, what’s going to happen with that safe that could become a projectile and hurt somebody in the car. Another thing is if you’re drilling that safe into something it could go into the wiring harness or something like that and maybe you know a safety thing in the car that would go to stop it or possibly punching a wire into a system or a hydraulic line and could make the car unsafe. What about the airbag deploying? If the airbag was to deploy and the gun safe was in a place that would prevent the air bag from deploying properly that could harm somebody or hurt somebody.

I do support the act authorizing persons to carry handguns in state parks because I feel that if I have -- if I’m a permitted carrier, I should be allowed to carry in places such as state parks if I’m hiking or something with my family. I certainly want to be able to protect them in those areas too. I support HB 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES. Again, Connecticut state law tells us what we should and shouldn’t do. We shouldn’t have separate municipal laws. I support HB 5870, AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES. I would like to sell my guns. I’m a law-abiding citizen. I do have an AR-15, over 20 years in the United States military. I would like to be able to sell that gun to another person who has the same
credentials, that are already on the list of authorized persons to own. It wouldn’t increase the number of firearms. It would just go out for transfer.

And, I would ask you to amend 7218 for the educational aspect like several others had spoke about earlier. I did two combat tours for my country. I went to Iraq in ’05 and Afghanistan in 2010. I retired from the military with over 20 years of service. I’ve never done anything to my country that would disrespect it or add negatively upon it, and I don’t ever plan to. I just want to be a law-abiding citizen and follow the laws that pertain to me. I ask you to consider my testimony today.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you for your testimony. Are there questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. I very much appreciate it. You mentioned one of the bills that I don’t think anybody’s testified to yet today, which is the -- the bill about transferring the firearms, and I think that’s -- that’s one that you -- you mentioned some important aspects of it, and I’d like to hear what your thoughts are on it. You said that it won’t add any other guns. What does that mean?

DAVID SHUTE: Well, I have an AR-15. I would like to update it. I would like to be able to sell that AR-15 to get an updated version for competition, and I can’t do that. We can’t transfer those guns.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but you said that it won’t add any more guns.
DAVID SHUTE: I’m buying a gun in state already that’s already registered with the state of Connecticut.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so --

DAVID SHUTE: By an owner that has the same credentials.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so it’s -- so it’s only the transfer of already registered --

DAVID SHUTE: Yes, sir.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Weapons, and there only being -- this bill would only allow them to be transferred to people who already had one, right?

DAVID SHUTE: That’s the way I understand it, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, when you say it’s not all -- it’s not adding any new ones, so you can’t like bring one in from another state?

DAVID SHUTE: No. No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, it’s not adding to the number of firearms?

DAVID SHUTE: No. No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, and is it your understanding that it’s -- that any new people who are not already registered would be included in this?

DAVID SHUTE: I don’t see that’s the case, but I mean to me a law enforcement person moving into the state of Connecticut, a member of the military getting out should be able to own those weapons.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But that’s not in this bill.
DAVID SHUTE: It’s not in the bill.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, what’s in the bill is the defined number of people who are already registered can transfer the already registered firearms between them --

DAVID SHUTE: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But nobody outside of that already defined number are effected at all?

DAVID SHUTE: That’s the way I understand it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there any other questions or comments from other members? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

DAVID SHUTE: Thank you, sir.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We’ll hear next from Jeremy Stein, followed by Rep Gail Lavielle. Is she in the room? Jeremy Stein.

JEREMY STEIN: Thank you, Chairman Winfield, Vice-Chair Stafstrom, esteemed members of the committee. I’m the Executive Director of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I want to share some facts with you. Every day eight children are unintentionally shot or kills by a gun. Studies show that child access prevention laws and safe storage in general reduce the risks of adolescent suicide. One study found that keeping a gun locked lowers the risks of both unintentional injury and suicide for children and teenagers by 73 percent. A study found that households that locked both firearms and ammunition
had an 85 percent lower risk of unintentional gun deaths compared to those who lock neither. Last month in Oklahoma, four kids were having a party when they got a hold of an unsecured gun. They started playing with the gun. One kid was accidentally shot. On New Year’s Eve, a nine-year-old was shot in the back by a five-year-old cousin. Two days earlier, a seven-year-old boy was shot by another child inside his home in Florida. December 12, a toddler shot himself and seven-year-old brother after finding a gun left in the backpack in their home. In November, in Hartford -- and right here in Hartford, a four-year-old found an unsecured gun in his house and shot himself. This is a four-year-old, and we’ve heard from Mike Song and Kristin Song, and we know what happened with their 15-year-old.

All these shootings and deaths occurred in the safety of their own homes, and although these deaths and shootings were preventable by locking guns and keeping them out of the children -- out of the hands of children, not one of these incidents will result in someone being held accountable, and this needs to change, and that’s what we’re asking to be done with House Bill 7218, as well as 7219. New research by the American Academy of Pediatrics states where guns laws are strictest, half as many children die from firearms, and that is why we are recommending safe storage as our number one priority. We’re trying to save lives. We are not trying to interfere with anyone’s rights or perceived rights. Safe storage is not just about shootings in the homes. It’s also about preventing suicides, school shootings, and preventing urban gun violence. And, as far as the urban gun violence piece, many of the guns that end
up being used for crimes in our cities are -- are brought in from other states, but they’re also stolen from homes and cars from people who do not -- do not lock up their gun. I think we’ve heard from Chief Perez about that earlier. I spoke to a grieving mother yesterday whose 12-year-old, Clinton Howell, was shot and killed in front of their house in Bridgeport. We could easily call Ethan’s Law Clinton’s Law. The gun had been previously stolen. This is not a big ask. Every responsible gun owner knows guns should be locked up when they’re not in use. I’m not making this up. All the gun owners in the room know that. It’s even in the NRA Guide. If you look carefully right here on the guide that every gun owners gets in the state of Connecticut when they’re trained -- on the cover, it says safe storage fundamentals [Bell], if you turn to the page Chapter -- in one of the chapters, there’s a whole chapter dedicated to safe storage, so we are asking for all of the legislators to support 7218, 7219, 7223, and we are opposing the other bills that are on the docket for today.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Thank you. Are there questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Mr. Stein. Thanks for being here. You were mentioning about safe storage and securing a gun in the home and in a car. Do you have any idea of the cost to a gun owner of being able to store a gun in a home and in a car?

JEREMY STEIN: Sure. Well, there’s different devices that you can use. Obviously, the more secure the safe is, you -- the harder it is to
access, but I have a safe with me right here. This is a quick-access safe. This is probably one of the smaller models. It’s easily accessible. This is about $100 dollars at most sporting good stores, so you could get a storage device like this for $100 dollars at any sporting good stores, and when we’re talking about storing a gun in your car, this is what we’re talking about. This can be bolted into your car if you want. There can be a wire that’s connected, but obviously, there are different ways to make this more secure, and there are more secure safes than this, but what we’re talking about is a little over $100 dollars to get access to that quickly.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, the bill as proposed just says a safe. It doesn’t even require $100-dollar safe. There are cheaper safes than that; correct?

JEREMY STEIN: That’s correct.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, does the bill require the safe be bolted into the car?

JEREMY STEIN: The current bill does not.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. So, somebody can be in compliance with the law. They’ve got a $50-dollar safe that they use in their home, and they take that safe with them when they go in the car, and they use the same safe in the car.

JEREMY STEIN: Depending on the car, yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

JEREMY STEIN: You could use a safe in your home or your car. This could fit underneath the front seat
of your car, or this could be put in your nightstand.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Other questions from members of -- or comments from members of the committee? I’m seeing none.

JEREMY STEIN: And, if I could just add one more thing, Chairman? I know I went over my time.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): How long’s it gonna take?

JEREMY STEIN: Ten seconds.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Great.

JEREMY STEIN: This is a lower receiver of an AR-15. This is what we’re talking about regulating. This is something that I brought into the Capitol without problem. This is not considered a firearm. This is a problem. This is the main part of the gun, and under federal law if this is completed, this is considered a firearm. We’re asking to regulate this just like any other firearm.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Any other questions or comments? Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, good afternoon. Just a quick question. Did you ask anyone for permission to bring that into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, who -- who did you ask permission of?

JEREMY STEIN: State Capitol Police over -- over the course of the last couple months.
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, did they give you permission to bring that into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: There’s nothing that -- right now, this is just -- this is not considered a firearm.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): I’m sorry. Just --

JEREMY STEIN: There’s no prohibition on bringing this into the building.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Mr. Chairman, if I can --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Excuse me. Excuse me. As I suggested earlier, for or against, we do not have public displays. Please allow the Representative to question the -- Mr. Stein.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, just getting back to my question. You had indicated that you asked the Capitol Police on numerous occasions for permission to bring that into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): My question to you is did they give you permission to bring that into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: Today, I did not ask the Capitol Police, no.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): That is not my question. Your testimony was that you asked the Capitol Police on numerous occasions if you could bring that into the building.

JEREMY STEIN: Yes. Yes.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Did the Capitol Police give you permission to bring that into the building?
JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): When?

JEREMY STEIN: The last time I spoke to them was probably about three weeks ago.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, that permission was given to you how?

JEREMY STEIN: Verbally.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Over the phone?

JEREMY STEIN: In person.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): In person. Do you recall who you spoke with?

JEREMY STEIN: No.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Do you recall what day it was?

JEREMY STEIN: I don’t.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): But it’s your testimony that you inquired and someone -- Capitol Police -- an actual Capitol police officer said it’s okay for you to bring that in?

JEREMY STEIN: I’ve had on various occasions I’ve spoken to them many times, and what they told me is that if I wanted to bring a -- an 80 percent lower receiver into the building that they -- there was not anything that would prevent me from bringing it in -- into the building at all because it is not considered a firearm.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): What material is that made out of?

JEREMY STEIN: It’s some type of metal.
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, did that go off in the metal detector?

JEREMY STEIN: No. I did not bring this into the building today. [Laughter]. I -- this was brought in today -- this was brought in today by Chief A.J. Perez. [Audience responding].

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Upon whose request?

JEREMY STEIN: Upon my request.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, that was brought into the building today?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes. And, there’s nothing illegal about bringing this into the building right now under the current state of the law.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): No further questions, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Representative. Are there other members -- Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Sir, why did you think that you needed to ask to bring that into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: The reason why I thought to ask is because this is a part of the assembly of a firearm. Firearms are prohibited to be brought into the building, so I wanted to make sure that I wasn’t violating the law, but as I stated, this is not considered a firearm under Connecticut state law, so there is nothing that prevents me from walking into the Capitol with this piece of a firearm.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, what about under federal law?
JEREMY STEIN: Neither under federal law is this prohibited.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, so why if it’s not considered to be a firearm and I guess you’re trying to make us believe it’s just a chunk of metal --

JEREMY STEIN: No. That’s not what I’m asking you to believe.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, why would you have to ask permission then?

JEREMY STEIN: I don’t have to ask permission. I was making sure that the police were aware that I might be bringing it in, and I wanted to know if they would have a problem so that when I testified today, I’d be able to tell this committee what their response was, and their response was that this is not illegal to bring into the Capitol even though this is part -- this could be a part of an AR-15. Currently, under the current state of the law is not prohibited to bring this into the Capitol even though firearms are prohibited in this building.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, you said that you had to ask on numerous occasions --

JEREMY STEIN: I didn’t have to ask. I -- I asked when I went in because on multiple -- we’ve had various press conferences for the last couple of months, so at certain press conferences, I wanted to bring this piece into -- into show the press. So, I’ve asked various officers if I could bring this in.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, when you -- so when you woke up this morning, you believed that you had the permission of the state police -- of Capitol Police
to bring that into the building? Upon your exchange -- [Crosstalk].

JEREMY STEIN: Not when I woke up today, no.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, I thought that you said that you spoke to a member of Capitol Police unidentified at some point in the past three weeks --

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Or so, and at that time, there was an oral permission to bring that implement into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So --

JEREMY STEIN: Not this specific one.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay --

JEREMY STEIN: But a -- a -- what I discussed with them is if -- I said to them if I wanted to bring an 80 percent lower receiver, could I bring that into the Capitol? And, I’ve had just about every Capitol police officer that I’ve spoken -- well, every Capitol police officer that I’ve spoken to has said that I shouldn’t have any problems.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, when you woke up this morning, did you believe you had the permission of Capitol Police to bring that implement into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: When I woke up this morning, I -- like any other morning -- I believed what I had been told that I wouldn’t have any problem bringing in an 80 percent lower receiver into the Capitol because
this currently is not considered a firearm under Connecticut state law. I notice there’s a lot of questions about whether or not I asked permission to the Capitol Police, but the reality is I don’t have to ask permission from the Capitol Police because there’s nothing that prohibits me from bringing this into the Capitol --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So --

JEREMY STEIN: Even though this is part of an unfinished firearm.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): It’s a very simple question, sir. When you woke up this morning, did you believe the Capitol Police had authorized you bringing that implement into the building?

JEREMY STEIN: I didn’t think about it when I woke up this morning.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, if you didn’t think about it, why did you have somebody else bring it into the building for you?

JEREMY STEIN: I didn’t ask him today to bring it into the building when I woke up this morning. [Laughter].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Why didn’t you bring it in yourself?

JEREMY STEIN: Because it was in Chief Perez’s possession. I don’t own an 80 percent lower receiver.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Dubitsky.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. How do you know that’s an 80 percent lower?

JEREMY STEIN: Because it’s unfinished.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. How do you know it’s not a 79 percent lower? [Laughter].

JEREMY STEIN: I don’t. This is the term that is used for this kind of lower receiver in this condition where certain parts are not hollowed out, so I haven’t checked the actual percentage of finished versus unfinished, so it could be a 79 percent lower receiver.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Where do the bullets come out?

JEREMY STEIN: Where do the bullets come out of here?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah.

JEREMY STEIN: There are no bullets.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, that’s not a gun.

JEREMY STEIN: Under current state law, this is not considered a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But you would like a bill passed that would make that considered a firearm under Connecticut law?

JEREMY STEIN: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Where do the bullets come out?

JEREMY STEIN: Where do what bullets come out? I’m sorry. I don’t understand your question.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Guns shoot bullets; right?
JEREMY STEIN: Yes. Guns shoot bullets.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But that one does not.

JEREMY STEIN: It’s an unfinished firearm. There’s no -- there is missing parts to this.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

JEREMY STEIN: I can show you if you like.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, even if you put all the parts on, it still wouldn’t fire any bullets would it?

JEREMY STEIN: You would need bullets.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): You would need to machine that wouldn’t it?

JEREMY STEIN: In order to make this into a fully functional firearm, yes, you would need to further machine the part that I have in my hand.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, somebody who is knowledgeable in machining can make one of those out of a block of aluminum can’t they?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes. I believe so -- somebody that has the parts, has the machines, and has the -- the expertise could probably make it from scratch just like anyone can make a bomb from scratch.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, a raw block of aluminum is an unfinished lower receiver in the right hands; isn’t it?

JEREMY STEIN: Well, but the difference between what I have in my hand and a raw block is that this is intended to be used as a finished firearm, which is what’s currently in the bill right now. So, under the proposed bill 7219, in the -- in the language of
the bill very specifically it says that the definition of a frame or a lower receive is one in which it is designed and intended to be used in the assembly of a functional firearm. So, a raw piece of metal would not constitute in and of itself a — something that is intended to be used in the assembly of a functional firearm; whereas, what I have in my hand is.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But if you don’t know if that’s an 80 percent or 79 percent, you also don’t know if it’s a 50 percent; right?

JEREMY STEIN: I believe it’s more than 50 percent.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): How do you know?

JEREMY STEIN: Because I’ve seen other 80 percent lower receives, and this is identical to the ones that I’ve seen that the ATF has designated as an 80 percent lower receiver.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but — [Crosstalk].

JEREMY STEIN: I’ve also been told by law enforcement officers that this is an 80 percent lower receiver.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so under the bill, a 50 percent receiver would also be considered a firearm; right?

JEREMY STEIN: Under the current proposed bill, a 50 percent lower receiver if it is intended to be used in the assembly of a functional firearm could be a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Intended by whom?
JEREMY STEIN: Intended by the user -- by the person that is going to be prosecuted for such crime if passed.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so I could buy all of -- under this bill, I could buy all the 80 percent lower receivers I want so long as I want to use them as paperweights and not as firearms?

JEREMY STEIN: Well, under the current statute, if you’re -- if you’re buying an 80 percent lower receiver that is intended to be used as a firearm, then that would be -- it would be odd that you would buy a -- a device that is intended by its very manufacturer to be used as a functional firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But you’re saying that the --

JEREMY STEIN: But if you wanted to buy this as use it as paperweights, then the prosecutor would have to prove that your paperweights were intended to be used as a functional firearm --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): That I personally intended to use them.

JEREMY STEIN: Well, it’s like any other crime. If you have a specific intent crime, the state’s attorney would have to prove intent just like any crime, and so there’s no difference between what we’re proposing here or any other crime. Yes. The state’s attorney would have to prove that if you possessed a lower receiver that that was intended to be used as a functional firearm. That can be proved at -- by direct evidence, and that can be proven by circumstantial evidence.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so if I’ve got a -- a bare block of aluminum, and I drill one hole in it
thinking that at some point in the future I’m gonna build a firearm out of it, under this bill, that would be -- that block of aluminum with one hole drilled in it would be considered what -- a two percent receiver?

JEREMY STEIN: If your intent --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And would be illegal?

JEREMY STEIN: If your intent is to build a functional firearm, then that should be considered a firearm. If your intent -- no matter what state it’s in -- if your intent is to build a firearm, then if -- if it’s required that you have a background check and a permit to purchase a firearm, then it should be required that you have the same background check and the same permit to build a firearm. That’s all we’re trying to do here, so we’re not trying to say that you can’t build your own firearm. All we’re saying is look if you want to build a firearm in your own home, do so, but go through the same checks that you would have to do to own a firearm or buy a firearm in the state of Connecticut, which is have a permit, which -- go through the proper training, go through the proper background check, and then if you want to build your own gun and -- and you want to get the raw materials, you can do so as long as you are following the procedures laid out in this -- in this law.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so you’re saying that if I want to build my own firearm, I would what take a block of aluminum to the gun store and get a NICS check?

JEREMY STEIN: I’m not following you. I’m sorry.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, you say you -- you want people who make them to go through the same procedures. Well, the procedure is when you go to the gun store when you buy a gun you have an instant background check, and then they can sell you the gun if you check the instant background check. So, are you -- are you saying that you would want people to go through that procedure to manufacture a gun?

JEREMY STEIN: I think if you’re manufacturing a gun you have to go through more procedures, and those are regulated by federal law.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but if you are -- let’s say you are taking an 80 percent lower, and you want to turn it into a 100 percent lower, so you just said you want -- you want people who are making them to go through that same -- that same process.

JEREMY STEIN: Well, if I can acquire where are you getting the 80 percent lower from? Are you manufacturing it yourself from raw materials or are you buying it online at a store like ghostguns.com?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, you’re the one supporting the bill. You tell me.

JEREMY STEIN: Well, I’m -- well, I’m trying to answer the question, so -- so what I’m saying is --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen --

JEREMY STEIN: Yeah.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Gentlemen.

JEREMY STEIN: So, what I’m saying is --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Mr. Stein.
JEREMY STEIN: Sorry.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Stop for a second. Both of you, please. Okay. We need to get a transcription of this. We need to maintain a little bit of order. I need you guys -- the Representative is going to ask questions. You can answer the question, but we can’t engage in debate over the top of each other. I believe there was a question pending for you, Mr. Stein.

JEREMY STEIN: Sure. I apologize, Mr. Chairman. So, to answer your question, Representative Dubitsky. If you were to purchase an 80 percent lower receiver from a organization like -- a company like ghostguns.com, right now you can buy all the parts that you need to build your own gun without a background check with -- without any training, without a permit. There’s no age restriction, and there’s -- and the gun that you get has no serial number, no markings, no way to identify, and you can build that right now in the privacy of your own home, and because it’s an 80 percent lower receiver, and it’s not a finished firearm, it’s not regulated by federal or state law. So, what we’re proposing is that if you want to -- if you want to build a gun, right; that’s fine if you have a permit, if you are of age to possess a handgun, if you have the -- if you have the proper training, if you have a background check, then have at it because it’s probably easier for you in all actuality to buy a gun through a gun store than it is to build it yourself, but we’re not trying to interfere with those people who are trying to build their own gun like the gentleman that previously testified assuming he has all of the credentials, the permit, the background check, and so forth that we have in
Connecticut to ensure that people who carry guns, possess guns, are not criminals, are not people with mental health disorders that have been committed within the last year, that don’t have an active warrant against them, that aren’t children, and so -- so what we’re trying to do is just make sure that if you need a permit and background check to own a gun or to buy a gun in a store, a fully functioning gun, then you should have the same requirements to buy the parts to build that same gun.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, again, I -- I’m asking you -- you’re saying you’re not trying to prevent the people from making them so long as they have gone through a background check, so -- and --

JEREMY STEIN: And, have a permit.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, have a -- okay. Have a permit for what?

JEREMY STEIN: For a handgun.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Is that lower receive a piece of a handgun?

JEREMY STEIN: No. This is part of a long gun -- or a permit for a long gun. Whatever permit is required, but you can’t -- you can’t -- you know, you can buy a -- on ghostguns.com, you can buy a lower receiver for an AK-47. That is -- that is a prohibited weapon -- fully functioning is a prohibited weapon in Connecticut.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, assembling that in Connecticut is already a felony; isn’t it?

JEREMY STEIN: If you complete the -- if you complete the assembly, yes.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, this bill would not make it more of a felony. It would just already be a felony.

JEREMY STEIN: Well, what it would do is it would prevent a company like ghostguns.com and others from shipping in the parts so that people can readily manufacture banned weapons.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. The -- you can go to a gun store without a permit and buy a trigger assembly; right?

JEREMY STEIN: I believe you can. It depends on the type of trigger assembly, but I believe you can. If it’s a trigger assembly for -- for an -- for a fully automatic weapon, then no.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I mean just your standard bread and butter trigger assembly for any given firearm that you have. Your trigger breaks you can go to the gun store and buy a new one; right?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, if your barrel gets worn out you can go to the gun store and buy a new barrel; right?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. You don’t need a permit of any type to do that.

JEREMY STEIN: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): You don’t need to be of any specific age to do that.

JEREMY STEIN: I don’t believe so.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, if your slide cracks, you can go to either a gunsmith or a gun store or buy it online. You can buy a new slide; right?

JEREMY STEIN: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. You don’t need any special permit?

JEREMY STEIN: I don’t believe so.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, if you buy all those parts whether from one place or a whole bunch of places, that doesn’t make you need a permit; right?

JEREMY STEIN: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, what you’re focusing on is one part of the gun.

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, that one part can be machined from a block of aluminum.

JEREMY STEIN: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Or plastic.

JEREMY STEIN: I’m sorry?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Or plastic.

JEREMY STEIN: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Or steel.

JEREMY STEIN: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, again, if I decide that I’m going to do that, what kind of check do I get?
Do I go to the gun store with my block of aluminum and ask them to run a background check on me?

JEREMY STEIN: You’re saying that you are taking a block of aluminum and you’re going to manufacture a lower receiver out of that?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah.

JEREMY STEIN: So, that is a firearm. Under the proposed law, if you are manufacturing lower receivers, which are -- and lower receiver is a fully -- a completed lower receiver is actually considered a firearm under Connecticut law, then that would be a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, what kind of check would I need?

JEREMY STEIN: If you wanted to build it out of raw material you’re saying?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): If I have a block of aluminum --

JEREMY STEIN: Yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, I want to manufacture that into a functioning firearm. You said that you want me to make -- you want to make sure that I have a permit and a background check.

JEREMY STEIN: To buy from -- to buy it from a -- to buy it from a store -- a gun store. If you want to build a gun from raw materials, I -- I think it would be hard for anyone to enforce any law that is -- to have someone who manufactures anything out of raw material in the privacy of their own home.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, what you’re saying is that you’re contradicting your previous
testimony, which said -- where you said go for it if you want to make these things. Now, you’re saying, you can’t make them.

JEREMY STEIN: No. That’s not what I said.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, can I make it?

JEREMY STEIN: Under current law, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But under this bill?

JEREMY STEIN: Under this bill, if you possess a lower receiver or a frame that is intended to be used -- designed and intended to be used as a fully functional firearm, then that becomes a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, what check do I get in order to enable me to do that?

JEREMY STEIN: I don’t think there’s any check.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So --

JEREMY STEIN: If you made it from raw material, I don’t think there is any check.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, it’s banned completely.

JEREMY STEIN: No. That’s not -- that’s not the case at all.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, is there any way that I can do it legally under this bill?

JEREMY STEIN: I think you can.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): How?

JEREMY STEIN: I think because you aren’t -- well, I think if you leave it in your house, under the current version of this law, and you manufacture --
well, not manufacture -- build a gun from raw materials from a block of metal and you never leave your house, I’m not sure that this law would prevent that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, but this law says that if I am in possession of a partial lower or a partial frame -- let’s get away from the lower because that’s assault weapon and that’s already a felony. All right. Manufacturing an assault weapon in this state is already illegal, so let’s say a pistol. Let’s say we’re talking about just the frame of a pistol, and I’ve got a block of aluminum, and I want to turn it into the frame of a pistol. How do I do it legally under this bill?

JEREMY STEIN: Is this a -- is this -- are you going to be leaving the house with this or are you keeping it in your home?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Is there some specific -- [Crosstalk].

JEREMY STEIN: Well, because right now the -- sorry. Go ahead.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Is there some specific requirement in the bill? I didn’t --

JEREMY STEIN: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): See that where it talks about being in the home or out of the home.

JEREMY STEIN: The only thing that this is doing is changing the definition of what a firearm is in the state of Connecticut, so -- so what -- what you would have to do is after you manufacture it you would have to obtain a serial number. Okay?
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, that’s all this bill does is it requires a serial number?

JEREMY STEIN: No. What it does is it makes the device -- the lower receiver in the definition of what a firearm is, so what that means is that when a gun store like ghostguns.com is shipping a part like this to citizens in Connecticut that is considered a firearm. And, why is that important? Because you can’t buy a firearm -- a fully functional firearm from out of state unless you have a federal firearms license, so I have a gun permit. I cannot buy a gun from somebody in Massachusetts and have that shipped to my house because I do not have a federal firearms license, so what I have to do is I then have to either have it transferred to me from somebody with a federal firearm license, an FFL, and then that -- and the reason why that is the case in Connecticut is so that the FFL member owner can then do a background check on me before he transfer that gun to me to make sure that I’m not a felon, that I’m not a prohibited person, and I have a valid permit.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I -- I understand that part. That’s a given, but I -- I really want to focus on what a legal owner -- a permit holder, somebody who owns a -- who has a pistol permit. What does that person need to do in order to be able to make a lower -- make a -- the frame of a pistol either from a billet, a block of aluminum, or something that’s already partially manufactured? You said that you want to see a background check. How would that work under this bill?

JEREMY STEIN: So, like I said, if -- if you’re manufacturing a gun from scratch, what would be required when you -- when you fully assembled the
firearm would be that you would then have to obtain a serial number from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, so that is a requirement of building your own firearm from scratch.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

JEREMY STEIN: Because you’re not -- what you’re describing is not a transfer of a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Correct. It’s a man -- it’s a -- [Crosstalk].

JEREMY STEIN: You’re manufacturing it from scratch. [Crosstalk].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It’s one person making their own gun.

JEREMY STEIN: Right, and -- and that could be considered manufacturing, which would have certain federal regulations.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. I’m not concerned about the federal regulations. I’m concerned about this bill -- the text of this bill. The text of this bill is -- is it your -- is it your testimony that the text of this bill would allow a licensed pistol permit holder to make a frame of a pistol? And, if so, how? Where do they get the background check?

JEREMY STEIN: If someone is not transferring the firearm -- because Connecticut doesn’t require a -- a permit for possession of a firearm in their own home, then this bill would not affect that. So, all -- so, if you have a gun in your home, you cannot -- you cannot leave that home unless you have a permit to carry, so if you are -- so when you’re building a
firearm, it would be the same process as having a fully functional firearm. It wouldn’t be any different. The only exception would be that this bill makes sure that if you are going to be building your own firearm in your own home that that firearm contains some type of identifying mark in the way of a serial number.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, wouldn’t it be — [Crosstalk].

JEREMY STEIN: So that people aren’t manufacturing their own ghost guns that are untraceable.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Then wouldn’t it be better then to just pass a bill that said anybody who makes their own gun has to get a serial number?

JEREMY STEIN: I think that’s what it says.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well.

JEREMY STEIN: I think that’s exactly what it says.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, no. It talks about possession of something that you just brought right through security into this building, making that a gun, even though it can’t shoot anything; right?

JEREMY STEIN: I’m sorry. What was the question? [Laughter].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It does not just say that. It says that possession of the thing that you’ve got with you would be a crime.

JEREMY STEIN: It depends on the type of firearm. If this -- after this bill pass, if I brought in an AR-15 lower receiver into the Capitol where firearms are prohibited, then yes this would be a felony.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. All right. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, Mr. Stein, I was just reading the proposed bill language, and the operate part of the bill as I understand it says that no individual shall complete the manufacture or assembly of a firearm without obtaining a unique serial number or other mark of identification from the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection or themselves engraving upon or permanently affixing to the firearm such serial number or other mark in a matter that conforms with the requirements otherwise imposed by law, and that in Subsection c of Section 2, it provides that the person who is manufacturing that firearm would have 30 days to reach out to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, provide the necessary identifying information, and potentially achieve the completion of that weapon but with a serial number or like identifier. Is that your understanding of the bill?

JEREMY STEIN: Yes. It is.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, that’s what this bill accomplishes; correct?

JEREMY STEIN: It’s one of the things it accomplishes.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): That it requires.

JEREMY STEIN: Exactly.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much, Mr. Stein.

JEREMY STEIN: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up -- she’s not here yet. We’re gonna go with Donna Wnuk.

DONNA WNUK: Hello. Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak today. My name’s Donna Wnuk. I’m a parent, a long-time Connecticut resident, and an active voter, and I currently reside in Bloomfield, and I’ll be testifying today in favor of the proposed gun safety legislation. So, to be clear, I support House Bill 7218, 7223, 7219, and Senate Bill 60. Like other supports of these bills, I’m a part of a majority of citizens who recognize that gun violence is out of control. I was in some ways offended by some of the earlier commentary about the differences between for coats and lawnmowers and bleach. We don’t have a violence problem with bleach or lawnmowers or fur coats, but we do have one in this country and in this state with gun violence. The NRA famously says guns don’t kill people. People kill people. But common sense tells us that people with guns whether they’re criminals or minor or any number of categories of people do kill and harm more often than people without guns. While I acknowledge a 2nd Amendment right to bear arms, I believe that guns must be kept out of the wrong hands, and since lawful gun owners have failed on their own to do this, I think that legislation is required to keep our communities safe.

House Bill 7218 and 7223 will make lawful gun owners more accountable for what happens to their firearms. Requiring that both loaded and unloaded firearms are
securely secured will reduce both gun death and injury from stolen guns that are used in crimes. It will also curb unintentional school shootings and teen suicides. I agree that education will be useful. But how many of our teens know they shouldn’t use drugs; they shouldn’t use guns already?

Senate Bill 60 enables law enforcement to ensure that somebody carrying a gun actually is a lawful permitted owner. Current law requires officers to wait until there’s reasonable suspicion before requesting proof of permit, but waiting until someone starts acting suspicious and draws a gun and shoots is a very short period of time. I don’t think that waiting until that point in time to discover that the gun carrier is a lawless carrier makes very much sense. [Bell]. I stand with the Connecticut Police Chief’s Association, the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, and the Chief’s State Attorney in supporting the bill. And, finally, --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Please summarize.

DONNA WNUK: I do have more to say about the ghost guns, but I’ll stop. I do want to say that proactive gun safety is a shared responsibility. We citizens have the responsibility to stay informed and to make requests of our legislators. You legislators have the responsibility to pass bills, and then lawful gun owners have the responsibility to follow them.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

DONNA WNUK: Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you for your testimony. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you so much for being with us today.

DONNA WNUK: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up will be Representative Gilchrest.

REP. GILCHREST (18TH): Good afternoon, Representative Stafstrom and members of the committee.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Good afternoon. Would you just introduce who’s with you?

REP. GILCHREST (18TH): Yes. I’m with Katie Martin. Just a quick intro. I’m Jillian Gilchrest, State Representative for the 18th District, proud member of Mom’s Demand Action, New Town Action Alliance, and Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I think we should be doing all we can to prevent gun violence on our streets, in our schools, and in our homes. And, I applaud the committee for having a level of urgency, the same level I do to address gun violence in introducing a number of bills, and so now I will turn it over to Katie Martin who is the Hartford area local group lead for Mom’s Demand Action.

KATIE MARTIN: Thank you, Representative. Dear chairs and distinguished members of the joint committee on the Judiciary. My name is Kate Martin. I am a West Hartford resident and a mother of four young children. I am submitted testimony today on behalf of the Connecticut Chapter of Mom’s Demand Action for Gun Sense in America in support of House bill 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS. The reason I’m here today as a Mom’s Demand Action volunteer
and not at work and not at home with my four young children is because I am deeply concerned by the levels of gun violence in this country. And, while I realize there is no one solution to the epidemic levels of gun violence we experience in the United States regulating ghost guns and 3D printed guns is a common-sense step we can take to close a dangerous loophole that is undermining public safety. We have already decided as a state to require a background check on every gun sale. Passing this law is essential to ensuring Connecticut’s existing background check law, applies to 3D printed guns, and unfinished receivers, which can easily be turned into firearms, but can legally be purchased under current law without a background check. Without this law, a dangerous person with the right tools can easily access everything they need to assemble an untraceable, unserialized gun at home.

This bill makes sure that our laws are keeping up with the changes in technology that are occurring. Guns that are unserialized and plastic 3D guns that can evade metal detectors pose two great risks to the safety of our communities for us to leave them unregulated. We already know that ghost guns have been used in mass shootings and attacks on law enforcement and have been seized in criminal investigations including here in Connecticut in Southington and Willimantic, and have been found on the streets in Bridgeport, Connecticut. New Jersey has already acted and passed a law regulating ghost guns. Connecticut should be next. The laws that we enact say something about the priorities of its citizens, and let us recall that less than one year ago over 11,000 people stood right outside this building demanding common-sense changes to our gun
laws. Regulating ghost guns and 3D printed guns is just one of those changes.

Connecticut has been the national leader on gun violence prevention, and by passing this law regulating ghost guns, we will continue our leadership in these efforts to keep our children and citizens safer from gun violence. I urge you to pass House Bill 7219, and I thank you for your time and consideration.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, and thank you, Representative Gilchrest for being with us. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you both for your advocacy. Next up will be Warren Stevens.

WARREN STEVENS: Which one?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Whichever you prefer.

WARREN STEVENS: What am I doing?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): You just turned it off. You just -- there you go.

WARREN STEVENS: Maybe it’s better if I did.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, then we won’t be able to get it on the transcription.

WARREN STEVENS: Before we start, I’m dealing with a little bit of an illness, so I’m not myself this morning, and I broke a tooth last night, and today’s my birthday, so I can think of 100 different places I’d rather be than sitting in front of you, sir. [Laughter].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, you share a birthday with the -- with my co-chairman, so there you go.
WARREN STEVENS: Well, if I can grab him, we’ll go out and have a beer. [Laughter]. Well, let me know when we’re gonna start. All right. Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and distinguished members of the joint committee, my name is Warren Stevens. I’m from Southington, Connecticut. I am also authorized to speak on behalf of the Southington’s Sportsman’s Association, one of the oldest fish and game clubs in Connecticut. We have over 400+ members, and with family members and adult children, we also represent a voting block of 1600 people who believe in the 2nd Amendment. I am also a federally licensed firearms collector and an arranged safety officer for my fish and game club. I am here to support Senate Bill 940, regarding the state forest, House Bill 5227, and House Bill 5870. I am here to oppose Senate Bill 60, presentation to carry permit, and that’s been beat up enough. I won’t go into it. I am here to oppose House Bill 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS. I have a lot more to say on that if I’m asked.

And, I want to deal with 7218 and 7223 together -- the storage ones. I realize that the last two bills on safe storage came about because of Ethan Song, and my heart goes out to the parents. I have a 15-year-old myself. From the newspaper and news reports I have seen, it appears there was a lack of judgement in firearms knowledge that resulted in a death. This could have been prevented with basic firearm safety courses presented in school. When I told my teenager this story, the reply was, “It’s so sad he had to die, but why was he playing with a firearm?” I sincerely wish that Ethan was alive today, and I mean this. With the parents’
permission, I could spend an hour with him and talk about firearm safety. Perhaps, someone like myself or another firearms person could have made the difference, and he’d be alive today. I know that CCDL, National Shooting Sports Foundation, and the NRA all have basic firearm safety knowledge classes available for schools. So, instead of pushing another punitive law after the fact that would just punish law-abiding firearms owners, we should get ahead of this problem and teach firearm safety in schools. Maybe this would save the next Ethan.

In 1990, Connecticut passed Public Act 90-144, AN ACT CONCERNING RESPONSIBILITY OF GUN OWNERS OF FIREARMS IN RESPECT TO CHILDREN. Sections 4 and 5 laid out for the Board of Ed and the Connecticut Police Chiefs to develop a firearm’s safety program. That was in July of 1991, 29 years ago. Where is it? [Bell]. Regarding -- I’m wrapping up, sir. Regarding the gun safes being demonstrated here today, I’ve attached two links to You Tube videos on my testimony. First one, the guy picks through the lock with a Bic pin like this in 30 seconds. The other video -- and it’s the safe Mr. Stein had -- the man using hammer and pliers pops it open in three minutes. I don’t believe they’d be a deterrent to next criminal or the next aggressive teenagers. Thank you, and I’ll take any questions you have.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you for being here, Warren. So, I’ll bite. You mentioned that you had a lot to say about ghost guns.
WARREN STEVENS: Yeah. Well, first of all, Mr. Stein was showing a lower 80 percent receiver for an AR-15. If you complete that into a firearm in Connecticut, you’re violating Senate Bill 1160, which has been on the books since Sandy Hook. That’s a dead issue. I also do a lot of historical reenacting. I’ve done things with the History Channel. Eighty percent lower receivers are purchased by many museums and historical societies to assemble what’s called a demo or a dummy gun, and they take that 80 percent lower receive, they put other parts on it to demonstrate like a WWII or a WWI-type weapon to put it in a case, but it’s a non-gun. Federal government doesn’t declare the gun, but the biggest problem I have with this ghost gun bill, it overlaps in other things. As a federally licensed collector, I can have a firearm shipped to my home, firearms were not required to have serial numbers until 1968. That was 51 years ago. I can’t believe it’s become a problem here today. There are many antique valuable and collector firearms that I can have shipped to my house under my federal collector’s license, but the problem, Senator Sampson, according to the language of the bill -- if I take that hunting rifle or military rifle from the 1920s or 30s, the first thing I do when I get that I disassemble it, I inspect it, I clean it, and I oil it. When I go to put it back together, if it doesn’t have a serial number, I’m violating the proposed law. I’m assembly a firearm with no serial number, but yet, it’s legal for me to -- to have shipped under my federal collector’s license. So, it -- it’s too broad, it’s too far reaching, and it -- it’s -- I could become a felon taking a 50-year-old gun apart, oiling it, and putting it back together. That’s just wrong, and if you --
particularly, on that, it overlaps some of the other bills, but I just I have a problem with the fact that on the gun safes -- this 29 cent Bic pen can defeat it or a hammer and pliers, and the other thing wrong with that that was mentioned about a safety cable, if you look at the second video I’ve supplied to the committee, man cuts through that safety cable in two or three seconds with common household pliers.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right.

WARREN STEVENS: That’s not gonna stop the next group of teenagers, and if you’re putting that box into the trunk of your car, you’re advertising to people, hey, here’s my guns. They go right in there, snip it, walk off with the box, and break it open at home.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): So, -- so, Warren, it sounds to me like there -- there are two issues that you have with the proposed ghost gun bill. One of them is that it -- it goes a lot further than just the notion of what we’re referring to as an 80 percent lower receiver. It covers a lot of things. So, how -- are there a lot of unserialized firearms in the world that were made that way?

WARREN STEVENS: Well, if you go before 1968, is that the question, Senator?

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Yes.

WARREN STEVENS: There’s millions of firearms out there -- collectors, antiques. I do Civil War reenacting. That’s a firearm. They didn’t put serial numbers on them 150 years ago. If I take that musket apart and re -- clean it and reassemble it, technically, under this bill, I’m assembly a gun
without a serial number, and to take that antique firearm down and get a serial number applied to it, then I’m killing the collector’s value.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Understood.

WARREN STEVENS: That’s just --

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): How about other types of firearms? I mean things that were produced you know more recently in the 50s and 60s for instance -- .22 rifles -- my understanding is you could have walked into any number of stores and purchased shotguns or various -- [Crosstalk].

WARREN STEVENS: There’s a lot of fine old hunting shotguns like the XYZ Company that went out of business 50 years ago, Acme Shotguns. They weren’t made with serial numbers, but they’re -- they’re still a hunting shotgun. They’re a collector’s item. You can buy them in a gun store. You can buy them with a collector’s license, but under the law, if I go out duck hunting with that thing, which I hunt with my antique firearms, it rains, I come home, I disassemble it to oil it, I go to assemble it, under this bill, I’m putting together a firearm without a serial number. Where does that leave me? I’m a felon because I --

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right.

WARREN STEVENS: Oiled an antique gun?

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Yeah. So, also I -- regarding the 80 percent lower receiver, how -- how far is that from being a firearm?

WARREN SAMPSON: Twenty percent away. It’s not a firearm. My -- I’ll speak to that too. I have several engineering degrees. I worked in aerospace
industry for almost 35 years. I was involved in a patent, and my father was a tool and die maker. To - to put that 80 percent receiver together that some thugs strung out on drugs isn’t gonna do it in his basement. You need machinery, you need training, and if these people are already selling drugs, they’re just gonna get guns in another way. They’re not gonna finish this.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Yeah. So, you don’t see this bill as an impediment to someone obtaining a firearm or even scratching the serial number off it or anything like that? I guess what I’m getting from you is that you’re concerned that this is going to affect people that are hobbyists or even unsuspecting gun owners that might own an older firearm that they’re certainly never --

WARREN STEVENS: It’s gonna have a major impact on us, Senator Sampson, and I believe Representative Dubitsky spoke to it either this year or last year -- building a firearm at home is not a crime.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right.

WARREN STEVENS: It is not a crime, and there’s a lot of home gun builders that build these things. You can build a -- [Crosstalk].

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. I’ve seen people -- [Crosstalk].

WARREN STEVENS: Yeah. You can build it for yourself as long as you use it for personal shooting or anything. If you go to sell it, then you’re required by federal law to go get a serial number, so there’s -- there’s layers of laws in place for these things already. This, to me, is just a punitive action at the end. You know, you break
into my house, you steal my firearm, that’s on you. I had nothing to do with it. And, I need access, Senator Sampson, to my firearms, and I’ll tell you why. I’m my family’s first responder. I take care of my wife, my daughter. I face the same dangers that police do. I face them first. I face them alone. I can face them at 2 a.m. in the morning. I need access to my firearm, and I’ll be the one that determines how it’s stored in my house in order to protect my family, not 20 minutes later after somebody calls the police and they arrive.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Very good. Thank you very much for your testimony, Warren, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions from the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for coming in. I had a couple of questions about the ghost gun bill. Are you familiar at all with the manufacturer of firearms?

WARREN STEVENS: The manufacturer of --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah.

WARREN STEVENS: Like somebody like Remington or Winchester -- I mean a factory manufacturer?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, no. Not manufacturer but the manufacture. How they’re made and what they -- what they --

WARREN STEVENS: You mean the process for making a firearm?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah.
WARREN STEVENS: As far as like machining it and everything?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah.

WARREN STEVENS: It’s one of the most complicated processes in the world to manufacture a working firearm. It is also one of the most heavily regulated federal activities or is in the United States. You just don’t go build a gun in 20 minutes in your basement.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Are you familiar with what’s called a security exemplar?

WARREN STEVENS: No, sir.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Do -- in Section -- lines 136 through 141 of -- of the ghost gun bill talks about that each -- each gun needs to have a piece of -- each -- each firearm from polymer plastic must have at least 3.7 ounces of material-type 17-4 PH stainless steel imbedded in the plastic. Do you have any idea what that is all about?

WARREN STEVENS: Well, as I said, I spent 34 years in aerospace and aviation inspection. That’s a piece of stainless steel with a temper and all that, but to put it in -- I’m just guessing -- but it’s probably to strengthen it or it’s involved in the manufacturing process somehow, but I’m just talking off the top of my head. But you’re imbedding -- you’re imbedding a piece of stainless steel into it, it’s gotta be for structural purposes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): How much steel is on the average polymer-framed handgun?
WARREN STEVENS: Polymer-framed handguns -- they don’t go through metal detectors like you hear.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I understand.

WARREN STEVENS: They just don’t. The polymer frame is -- is a non -- a nonferrous, a nonmetal substance, but there’s springs, pins, and trigger. There’s -- there’s more metal parts in that thing. The polymer frame is just one part that’s nonmetal, but it’s loaded with metal parts that can be detected by metal detectors. There’s no such thing as a gun that goes through a metal detector -- none.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, for example, a GLOCK 19 -- most people have seen them, a lot of police departments carry them. By weight, approximately how much steel is on a GLOCK 19 with a polymer frame?

WARREN STEVENS: Well, we’d have to look at a -- you know, the GLOCK site and see with the metal to polymer ratio is, but it’s -- it’s probably more than 50 percent metal. The metal is what gives it the weight, sir.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Approximately how much -- how many pounds of steel are in a GLOCK?

WARREN STEVENS: That I would have to look up, but --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Right. About?

WARREN STEVENS: Well, handguns weigh probably 2+ pounds, it would be at least half of that would be metal and steel, which you would need complex milling machines, CNC machines; again, my opinion some stoned out drug addict is not gonna make that GLOCK in his basement.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. With regard to -- there’s a -- Representative Blumenthal -- I’m sorry. Senator Blumenthal -- Senator Blumenthal -- Representative. [Laughter]. Representative. I apologize. Representative Blumenthal mentioned that a -- under this bill, a firearm could be made so long there was -- that the person had an opportunity to get a serial number for it, but I -- I -- I’m gonna ask you about the definition of firearm. Under this bill, a firearm, would include -- the definition of firearm would include something that was not finished.

WARREN STEVENS: It’s not a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. but under this definition, it would be; right?

WARREN STEVENS: Under the definition, but bottom line, the definition of a firearm is something that can discharge a bullet. If you have an 80 percent receiver and put together a dummy gun for display, it’s not a firearm, and it has no business being called a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for being with us. Next up will be Representative McCarthy Vahey and Nancy Lefkowitz, followed by Brian Corbino. Folks, while they’re getting settled in, there’s been a request from Capitol Police that if anybody else has gun parts on them [Laughter] -- if -- if you -- if you have any parts or pieces on you, can you please go inform the Capitol Police Department. Thank you. In any form.
Rep -- folks, folks. We’re trying to conduct a public hearing here. Representative, you have the floor.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and to ranking member Rebimbas, and members of the committee, thank you for having us here today. I am here today. I’m Cristin McCarthy Vahey. I represent the 133rd District, and I’d like to share my time today with Nancy Lefkowtz who’s a Fairfield RTM member, member of the Connecticut Against Gun Violence Board, as well as member of the Brady National Advisory Committee.

NANCY LEFKOWTZ: Thank you to the members of the committee. I’m here today to testify in support of HB 7218, 7223, 7219, and Senate Bill 60. I support an individual’s right to own a gun. I support an individual’s right to protect one’s self and one’s family. I support the 2nd Amendment. What I don’t support is the gross misinterpretation of it --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Excuse me. Excuse me. Folks, the chatter in the back has to stop. We need to allow -- I understand that there are folks on both side of the contested issue today. Both have passionate opinions one way or the other. However, we are trying to conduct a public hearing here where the public has an opportunity to testify. The members of this committee have an opportunity to testify. The talking in the back of the room, comments, laughter need to be contained. I’m admonishing everyone equally on that point. If you must have a conversation, please go out in the hallway and have the conversation. Ms. Lefkowtz, the floor is yours.
NANCY LEFKOWTZ: Thank you. Respectfully, my comments are short. I’d like to start again, please. I support an individual’s right to own a gun. I support an individual’s right to protect one’s self and one’s family. I support the 2nd Amendment. What I don’t support is the gross misinterpretation of it or the false notion that the only way to protect one’s self or one’s family is by having a gun in the house that’s not stored safely. An unlocked gun is 30 times more likely to be used to horrifying or tragic effect against a loved one. Every day, eight children under the age of 17 are unintentionally shot or killed by a gun. Since that tragic day in December 2012, when I became an unwitting activist on the issue of gun safety and in this setting urged your colleagues to vote for rational, common sense change to our current gun laws, 18,224 children under the age of 17 have been shot or killed by a gun that was easily accessible. Securely stored firearms could have prevented most of these tragedies. Safe storage laws keep firearms out of the reach of young children, suicidal teens and adults, domestic abusers, and criminals.

I’m here today as the neighbor of a woman who died by a gun at the hands of a domestic abuser. I’m here for my cousin who died by suicide from a gun. I’m here as a citizen activist, as a district representative, as a voter, but most importantly, as a mom. I urge you to change this narrative. You -- you have the power to stop this bleeding. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Oh, Representative Rebimbas.
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, good afternoon. Thank you for your testimony. Just a quick question regarding your opinion. Do you believe that education regarding firearms would assist in this issue?

NANCY LEFKOWTZ: I believe education would help.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

NANCY LEFKOWTZ: Can I add a comment though? I don’t necessarily think it needs to be part of a bill, but certainly, educating anyone on the issue of firearms including the risks and the dangers of owning a firearm would be important information to be shared and educate people on.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Through you, Mr. Chairman, if I may respond? Thank you for your opinion. In fact, we’ve heard earlier that it’s actually already been law for many years, and it hasn’t happened, so I guess we just differ in that that I think that reinforcement in any law is going to be required. Unfortunately, we haven’t followed the law already. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you both for being here. I appreciate it.

NANCY LEFKOWTZ: Thank you.

REP. MCCARTHY VAHEY (133RD): Thank you for your time.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up will be Brian Corbino, followed by Brian Lanoue.
BRIAN CORBINO: Good afternoon. Is this thing on? Good afternoon, honorable members of the joint commission -- joint committee on the Judiciary. My name’s Brian Corbino. I am from Southington, Connecticut, and I am testifying today to raise Bill 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. I’m an NRA certified range safety officer, a recreational shooter, and I’m working towards becoming an NRA certified instructor. I’m also an information security professional [Phone ringing]. Excuse me. I turned that off. That was not my intention. I apologize. Physical securities impinging on data security. This bill as it stands is -- it’s a pointless distraction from the true problem at hand, and that is that teenagers and children everything they know about guns they learn from television and from movies and from video games, and you know, in -- in firearms, we have four cardinal rules that you never violate in terms of firearm safety, and in this tragic event that happened last January, all of those rules were violated multiple times.

In 1990, you’ve already heard that we have, you know, Section 10-18b of the general statutes where it says that the State Department of Police may allow for the development of correction, and I think what we need to be concentrating on [Phone notification] -- we need to be concentrating on is changing that from may to shall. In a rather disturbing development, I’ve seen that at least one group is actively opposed to education saying that -- they say, we don’t believe it’s a kid’s job to keep him or herself safe from an adult’s gun, but I would argue that safety’s everyone’s job, and you know, the media isn’t helping us any because they
misreport on these things, so instead of reporting it as negligence or as an event caused by miseducation, they tell us it’s an accident. And, if you believe this is an accident, you have to believe that these two young men accidentally opened the closet, accidentally took the box out of the closet, accidentally opened the box, accidentally took the gun out of the box, accidentally unlocked the trigger lock from there, and on and on and on, and we know what happened. And, this bill expects us to believe that they wouldn’t accidentally defeat the fake security theater of a readily available at retail gun safe. The safe that you saw this morning -- because it relies on batteries [Bell], if the battery dies, you have to be able to open it -- I’ll wrap up very quickly. You have to be able to open that safe. You use a bypass key. Those bypass keys are very often weak enough to be defeated in seconds with no technical knowledge of locks or locksmithing. And, I’ll finish up by saying security theater is not the answer. Proper education is. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Questions from the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for coming in. You mentioned education. What type of education would you want to see added to this bill?

BRIAN CORPINO: Well, at the very least -- I mean I’m not overly familiar with the specific youth education programs, but at the very least something along the lines of things that have been shown to work in the past like Eddie Eagle or Project Child Safe. Teaching children that yeah I know you see
these things in video games and on -- on the tv, but it’s not a toy, it’s not just this ethereal thing. It’s an actual machine that will do actual things to actual people, and you have to respect that and not point them at things. And, you know, as a range safety officer, I see violations all the time at the range, and I have to stop and correct these people so they don’t hurt themselves or others. And, at the very least, teaching children, you know, the four rules -- the gun is always loaded, always treat any gun as though it’s loaded. You don’t point it at anything you don’t want to destroy. You don’t pull the trigger unless you intent to shoot the gun, and know what you’re shooting at and what’s beyond it because bullets don’t care about what they are going towards. They’ll go through things, and if you’re -- you don’t get a redo. There’s no continue button to push after you’ve pulled that trigger. You can’t take the bullet back. And, drilling this into their heads, you know, there’s no takebacks. This is permanent. You don’t get to do it over. I’m sorry won’t help, and as a result of the -- you know, what I would consider to be maleducation, we have one young man dead, another young man’s life shattered, families torn apart, and I don’t want to see that anymore. But saying, okay, now you have to take this gun, and lock it in this box that is trivial to get through is somehow gonna solve the problem? It’s not.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, sir, for your testimony today.

BRIAN CORBINO: Thank you.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, I’ve also run ranges, and I did in the Marine Corps, and you know, we were highly trained to handle firearms, and in the Marine Corps when we weren’t using our firearms, they were locked away, so I’d just like you to explain why if these Marines -- if the Marine Corps doesn’t trust these Marines who’ve gotten hundreds, if not thousands, of hours of education on their firearms -- if they don’t trust them to handle those firearms when they’re not using them without locking them up, why should we expect a four-year-old to be educated and handle those firearms safely when they’re not locked up?

BRIAN CORBINO: Well, in your specific case, the guns were probably stored in a far more secure facility and were also being guarded most likely. I’ve not been in the military, so -- by the way, thank you for your service, while we’re at it -- and I’d say happy birthday to Senator Winfield, but he appears to have gone to lunch -- I’m not saying don’t lock your guns up. What I’m saying is don’t put your guns in $100-dollar box and think that you’re safe. If you’re going to -- security is a mindset. It’s not a thing. It’s not a single action. And, just locking the gun into the box -- you know, that will stop your toddler from getting at it. You know, that’s what they’re -- they’re gonna stop a four-year-old from getting in there and playing with things they don’t comprehend. A four-year-old isn’t gonna pick that lock. A 15-year-old on the other hand is going to go on Youtube, they’re
gonna type in the name of the safe, and they’re gonna see video after video after video of how to defeat that device. Now, there are devices out there that would take significantly longer to defeat, and you know, your average teenager probably isn’t gonna be interested in vesting hours and hours and hours of learning how to bypass a complex lock, but then again you’re also talking about a gun safe that’s $300, $400, or $500 dollars, which now you get into a problem of you got someone who is of limited means, they buy a firearm for personal protection for home protection. To then turn around and ask them to spend just as much on a bedside lock, may put that -- that security out of their reach. So, I think educating the children will in fact reduce more -- reduce the problem more than requiring a lock that you would only hold somebody responsible for not having after the next person is dead.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, I’m not gonna get into debate about teenagers or whatever, but you agreed basically that a safe would prevent a four-year-old from getting to a weapon; right?

BRIAN CORBINO: Yes, and --

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, why wouldn’t that be a good thing to -- [Crosstalk].

BRIAN CORBINO: Well, it’s already --

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): That they already use a safe so that say a four-year-old couldn’t get to that weapon and hurt themselves with it?

BRIAN CORBINO: Well, it’s already the law in Connecticut that a gun that is loaded has to be locked into a safe. An unloaded gun in the hands of
a four-year-old really doesn’t pose much of a hazard because they’re not going to be physically able to load the gun I don’t think. I could be wrong. I don’t have any four-year-olds, so if you got a four-year-old and they can load a gun, correct me.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Try an eight-year-old.

BRIAN CORBINO: Again, this law only comes into effect after something bad has happened. I want to prevent the bad thing from happening in the first place, and simply saying, okay, you need to lock that up. All right. If I don’t lock it up, come get me. You have no way of verifying it. There’s no legal way you’re gonna say, okay, we need to see, Mr. Jones how you stored your firearm to make sure it meets with our safe storage requirements.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, are you advocating that we need to have -- we need to print the bill that these be more rigorous safes and there needs to be more inspection; is that what you’re saying?

BRIAN CORBINO: Absolutely not. What I’m saying is there is no constitutional way to enforce it before the fact, and so rather than coming up with yet another way to punish somebody after the fact, which you know if I’m honest in Connecticut something like 78 percent of all gun-related charges are pled away or dropped anyhow, but that’s neither here nor there -- what I’m saying is by ignoring the education aspect of it, by pretending what we have now is adequate and we don’t treat it that way for texting, we don’t treat it that way for drunk driving, we don’t treat it that way for you know driving your car like a hooligan. We expect -- we teach children and young adults how to respect the machinery that they’re operating, how to respect the alcohol that
they may or my not consume -- whether they should or not is another story. We should be doing the same thing with firearms and we don’t. All we do is say gun’s bad, and you know, to -- to a teenager saying this is bad, guarantees that they’re gonna way to try and learn on their own, and when they try to learn about a dangerous piece of equipment on their own whether it be a firearm or a chainsaw, something bad is going to happen.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, driving like a hooligan is not legal; correct?

BRIAN CORPINO: It is not.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Does that prevent every person from driving like a hooligan?

BRIAN CORPINO: There is no way to prevent everything, and to think you can mean, you know, you’re living in a dreamland where we can predict crime, and we can’t.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): But the fact that driving like a hooligan is illegal, prevents some people from driving like a hooligan; right?

BRIAN CORPINO: The ones who are more concerned with getting arrested than with getting hurt, yes, but I think by teaching people you know the boogieman -- personal responsibility. Take responsibility for what you’re doing and what it might do to others. So, if you’re gonna drive your car 90 miles an hour on back roads, I can pretty much guarantee you at some point something bad is gonna happen, so maybe don’t do that, and in order to drive that into people’s heads -- when I was -- when I was a kid, they decided that we needed to be taught the perils of drunk driving, and they brought in a slide show.
For those of you are too young to know what a slide show is, that’s where they actually have individual pictures they put up one at a time. They didn’t move or talk, and we had a police officer there, and he put up a picture of an accident scene, dismembered bodies all over the place, a burnt husk of a car, and the idea of this was to impress upon a young mind what bad consequences actually look like instead of leaving it to their imagination.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): I get your point that education would be helpful, and I don’t dispute that. My only point is that we make a number of things legal or illegal because they are deterrents; right? The law --

BRIAN CORPINO: In theory.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Guides people’s behaviors; right?

BRIAN CORPINO: In theory.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, if you’re a gun owner and you don’t have bad intent, you don’t want people to get hurt, but you just aren’t the most careful person -- if you know that it’s illegal not to put your gun in a safe, you’ll probably put your gun in a safe; right?

BRIAN CORPINO: Again, that comes down to how much you care about the law. I lock mine up anyway because I don’t want them stolen because I actually value them as things that I have.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Great, and I appreciate that. But my point is merely that I think you’ve acknowledged that the law can guide behavior and the law can cause people who do care enough about the
law to follow it, to take the appropriate safety measures to prevent -- as you said a four-year-old or an eight-year-old to getting to a gun; right?

BRIAN CORPINO: Yes.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. So, thanks. That’s all I wanted to know.

BRIAN CORPINO: Can I follow up with one thing though very quickly? I think the mistake we’re making is by having the law as it stands without having changing Section 10-18b’s language from may to shall. We’re leaving something important on the table, and also by not having a guideline for what constitutes reasonable security, we might be giving ourselves a false sense of security, which is worse than no security at all.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): You’re not against people having to take certain safety measures and put their guns in a safe. You just like education as well; right?

BRIAN CORPINO: Yes. And, I want people to understand that just by putting your gun in a gun lock isn’t going to stop somebody from getting it. you have to have multiple actions that you take to secure these things.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. Thank you.

BRIAN CORPINO: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your time.

BRIAN CORPINO: Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up will be Representative Lanoue. Welcome, Representative.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, ranking members, members of the committee. My name is Brian Lanoue. I am the State Representative for the 45th District in my first term. It’s several towns in Eastern Connecticut -- Griswold, Voluntown, Sterling, Plainfield, and Lisbon. I’m here today to testify in favor of House Bill 5227, that’s AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES. What this simply does for the purposes of this bill is prevent local towns or cities from further laws or further regulations above and beyond what current state law is in regards to firearms. This aims to allow people in the state to worry about their affairs, plan their affairs accordingly, acting as law-abiding citizens with state gun permits. We’re a very congested state. We’re geographically small with 169 municipalities. It’s impossible to know all the local ordinances, so that’s what this seems to do -- just make sure every who’s in compliance with state law ensure to not violating any other law.

You know, I recently about a week and a half ago read to a group of third graders in one of my towns for Dr. Seuss Day, and I read Horton the Elephant, and it talked about how he helped the weaker, and after the reading, I got to talk to the kids a little bit, and I asked -- I explained how I was a law maker, and what -- what’s the law maker’s responsibilities, and this little third grader said to protect the weak against the strong. So, that’s essentially what this bill aims to do -- where if you have that victim of domestic violence. This
woman that may commute from work -- form her house to work, and it’s several towns over -- say six, seven, eight towns, where she stops in one of those given towns -- she has a state gun permit. She’s concealing, and by simply stopping, getting gas on her commute, she not even to her knowledge is in violation of a town law or a city law that perhaps says you can’t conceal within the city or town limits, and potentially gets arrested and has a -- for something she even normally did. She’s fulfilling her compliance according to state law, and the -- this local law that she’s not even aware of, she gets arrested. So, it’s -- it’s to prevent -- it’s to prevent that from happening, and ultimately, just being -- making sure we’re in compliance with the state law, following the state law, and not -- not putting more regulations above that on the law-abiding citizens and those who are exercising their 2nd Amendment rights. So, I thank you for -- for testifying, and I’d be happy to take any questions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative, you represent several towns in the state; correct?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I do.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, are you in favor of those towns being able to set their own school curriculum?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I do.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. The state sets a minimum for school curriculum, but your towns can require additional things over and above that; correct?
REP. LANOUE (45TH): I guess for education purposes; I do support a home rule. Well, absolutely.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): How about when it comes to zoning or housing policy in your towns; do you believe your towns should be able to decide how much affordable housing goes into their towns?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Zoning should be a home rule issue or a town or a city issue, yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. So, what’s the distinction between the town being able to set its own gun regulations as opposed to its own any other home rule issue that it might have?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Yeah. I thank you for the question. Quite simply, number one, it’s -- it’s a constitutional right -- the 2nd Amendment, but again, there is -- there is a lot of issues. I would say most issues a support a home rule concept. However, there are issues where home rule isn’t the -- the best option, and this -- this is one of them. Railroads for example, if -- imagine if the railroad industry had to be compliant with local zoning or other regulations of every single town within a given state in Connecticut or any other state. It would be near impossibly -- the railroad industry probably could barely function or regulating headlights -- if every -- if every 169 different municipalities regulate headlights and how much light it can emit, it would be near impossible for somebody to be in compliance with that going from one town to the next. This industry here, people in our state they -- they travel, they may go downstate commute to work, and going from one municipality to another you could be in violation of the law without even knowing it, so it simply protects the
individual. It makes sure that law-abiding citizens are still law-abiding citizens that are in compliance 100 percent with the current state law.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, one of your concerns is a potential constitutional infringement by these municipalities, but isn’t local ordinance subject to constitutional challenge in a courts just like any law that we pass in this building may be?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, if a municipality overreaches and passes a gun restriction that would not pass constitutional muster, the remedy for that is to bring a court challenge to it?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Considerably, but again, what we’re talking about is people who essentially they know what the state law is whether it’s good, bad, or ugly. You can look it up. It’s the one place you understand it. You follow it. You do everything as a law-abiding citizen to follow it. Some of these local ordinances would be near impossibly to know that they even exist.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): But don’t you have an obligation when you cross municipal lines? I mean some towns have different speed limits. Some towns have, you know, different restrictions with respect to you know what type of material can be transported into a state. I think some municipalities ban fracking waste, for example. You know, you have an obligation to know the rules. You can’t -- I see the Representative from Westport behind you. I think it’s illegal to own a plastic bag in Westport; correct? [Laughter]. So, you have to know when you -- I think that hearing’s across the hall.
[Laughter]. You have to know the particular rule when you go into a town, and you know, ignorance of law is no defense.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Well, again, when you mentioned like a speed limit. A speed limit is conspicuously displayed. You know that when your -- when you go into a particular zone, many of these are not conspicuously displayed. I will have no way of knowing that. If I stop for -- if I’m going to visit a friend in Stamford -- for example, I’m going downstate, down 95, I stop over for a bite to eat and -- or that single mother who is taking her kids to a ballgame downstate, stops over for a bite to eat at a given restaurant in given town, she’s concealing, she can be arrested not even knowing that there is such an ordinance. She’s following the state law dotting every “i”, crossing every “t”, following it to the letter of the law, but this is still in violation of a particular town ordinance, town law where she can be arrested I think is overreaching.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Further questions from the committee? Representative -- oh, were you going? Either way, Fishbein first, and then Dubitsky. Sorry.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’m glad to see it wasn’t like public safety where they can’t pronounce my last name, but anyway. [Person speaking off mic]. Gotcha, gotcha. Good afternoon, Representative. I just -- you were asked about zoning and local control. Do you have knowledge as to whether or not your local zoning ordinances trump actions of the state within your
district? Do you know whether or not that’s the case?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I would imagine any -- any law, you know as a federal law, a state law can’t trump what a current federal law states. I don’t think a local law can trump what a state law currently states.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah, so, you know, I know like in the town that I live in we have a zoning regulation with regard to the first 50 foot of frontage on a particular roadway that’s supposed to be green, and when the state came in to put in a new train station, they said, we don’t have to provide by your local zoning ordinances because we trump you, which is essentially what you’re looking for here. You’re looking for the state law to trump anything that would be local; is that fair to say?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): In this particular area, yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, you know, I -- a scenario that -- that comes to mind for me is if you go to the Department of Motor Vehicles to let’s say get permission to have a livery, a limousine or something like that, and the state through the Department of Motor Vehicles gives you that license and says, this is what you can do with it and that kind of stuff, and then the town of Griswold, which you represent, passes a local ordinance that says, we don’t allow limousines in our town. That’s something that you would be looking to prevent through this rule; is that -- is that correct?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Yes. This is to -- again, where law-abiding citizens can go about their business, can cross town lines, being in 100 percent
compliance with state law; again, whether we agree with all of it or not, but you’re following the state law to the “t” when it comes to carrying a firearm, having that permit, and being -- being the 100 percent law-abiding citizen according to the state of Connecticut that a local municipality cannot trump that state law.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And -- and you were asked about speed limit signs also, and I think you mentioned that speed limit signs when you enter a town -- the town limits is conspicuously displayed, one can’t you know just have it’s gonna be 20 miles an hour on this roadway and not have signs; correct?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): That’s correct.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, are you familiar with any towns that currently have their own local firearm regulations that post at the property borders and all accesses to the town what those restrictions are?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Yeah. I mean so there’s a few examples. One for example is how -- you’re not allowed to have unserialized firearms of any type within the city limits. That’s problematic for gun collectors, particular of antique firearms. For example, I was very intrigued with Samuel Colt, how he -- he thought of the revolver. When he was on the ship, he saw how the wheel of the ship behaved in a revolving motion, and if you could create a firearm in a similar fashion. Now, first -- first prototype, first generation of Colt revolver is very, very collectible, and that would be something I would have interest in as a historian -- something I’d like to collect. Now, in those particular municipalities, if you have that, you’re in
violation of the law, and I -- the state law already addresses it, and to -- unbeknownst to you, you have -- you’re in possession of one of these firearms, you can be charged with a crime.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): In addition to Griswold, what other towns do you represent?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I have Voluntown, Sterling, Plainfield, and I share Lisbon with Representative Dubitsky.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. I just want to -- I did have somebody compile for me some information. I just want to look at the following towns. All right. That’s all I had. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for bringing up this important issue. I certainly I heard your testimony with regard to collectors and you know, I certainly sympathize with that, but my questions are more directed towards you -- you mentioned earlier, you know, a woman with her child, perhaps she’s been abused and she has a firearm to protect herself. Let’s say she lives up in the Northeast corner, and she has to go to an appointment or something, you know in mid-state or even downstate, driving along Route 84, and connecting down to 91; how would she even know what town she’s in?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Yeah. I had discussed that very point. It would be very tough. If you’re driving along, particularly this single mother, someone who was potentially abused, she has her state permit, she’s commuting along, she pulls aside
for gas or for -- at an eatery, and you -- a local police officer sees she’s concealing a firearm, and there’s an ordinance in that particular town or city that prevents it. Even unbeknownst to her, she’s gonna get arrested, and how do you -- how do you gather all these different ordinances going from town to town, place to place, which is -- some of these towns are very small, and same thing with the cities. You don’t know these ordinances, and you’re following the state law to the “t”, and it’s -- it’s near impossible to have access or have knowledge of -- with that ordinances regarding a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Right. And, one could imagine that it could be literally impossible to comply with them all because as you’re traveling through the state, going from one place to another along either the highways or the local roads, you may have to change the way you’re carrying that firearm a dozen times in order to be in compliance, and it may simply be impossible just like the headlight scenario that you used previously.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Right. That’s very true. I don’t know how you -- if one municipality says, okay, you got to carry a firearm a certain way, the next town over says you can’t carry it at all, and then you go to your destination. It doesn’t leave you a lot of road to be in compliance, and it doesn’t leave you a lot of ability to freely travel the state, particularly that abused woman, a person who’s vulnerable, somebody who’s weaker or that potentially may have somebody stronger that’s trying to do them harm.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, thank you for coming, and I very much appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you. Thank you, Representative Lanoue for coming in today.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Thank you.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Just a couple quick questions. Do you have a pistol permit?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I do not.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): You do not. Okay. Do you know if somebody has a pistol permit how they get it?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Through the state.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Through the state. So, they pay their fees to the state?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I believe so.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay. So, the state of Connecticut gives them a license to carry a firearm. Shouldn’t the state of Connecticut be the one that tells them what they should be doing with that firearm?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Absolutely, Senator. I think that’s where the -- that’s where it comes from, that’s the law, I think that’s what the -- again, good, bad, or ugly how the laws are --

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Yeah.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): You’re trying to follow it; you’re being in compliance with it. Again, you
can’t have 169 laws regulating a firearm when you -- and you have the state permit.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Right.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): It would be -- it would be impossible to be in compliance with every single 169 different sets of laws --

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Right.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): On this given issue.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): And, I do have a pistol permit, and I carry once in a while. Being a retired policeman, I carry for, you know, a couple reasons, but I follow state law. I’m not gonna sit as I’m crossing the town line look up what the town ordinance is for carrying. Now, if it’s zoning and I’m gonna build something, then I have to look that up.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Right.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Or any others. If it is a speed limit like we were talking about, having enforced speed limits for many years, and the road has to be marked, and if it’s not, well, be careful writing those tickets because you got to know how fast they can go. I represent 13 towns, and just going from one end of my district to the other end of the district, if each town could pass their own laws, that could create a problem just for me driving from one end of my district to the other. We shouldn’t pass laws or we shouldn’t -- we shouldn’t make laws difficult for the average citizen to -- to know them, so if we’re gonna regulate any type of regulation, which I’m not for many of them, but if we’re gonna regulate, it should
be on the state level. It should not be on the local one; do you agree with that?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): I do, Senator, and you know also I feel that if a law -- if the law is too complicated to understand or even have access to, I think that law should cease to exist, and this is one of those examples.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): You also brought up a point about the ghost guns, and the fact that you know antique guns before the 1960s didn’t have serial numbers, and some of those are very valuable. I know of a couple that -- that don’t have serial numbers. One of them is a musket but -- you know, and -- and I don’t see anybody causing major problems with that, but you know, if you start putting serial numbers on some of these antique guns, you’re gonna take away a lot of the value, especially when the value of the gun, you know, is $25,000 to $50,000 dollars. So, do you think that that law should have some sort of -- if it does come to fruition, shouldn’t it have some sort of exemption to it for the antique guns?

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Absolutely. Again, the -- the law says anything before 1968 there’s no serial numbers. So, again, like I mentioned like the Colt for example, one of the original Colt revolvers -- something I would like to collect simply as a historian, certain municipalities I would be prohibited from doing that, and again, I’m -- I’m going to be disenfranchised based on a given town I live in for even from going to an antique show, you know, an antique roadshow, what have you, and I’m driving through the state. Again, I have that antique revolver in my car, and I’ll happen -- I
just happen to be in a municipality that says you can’t have any unserialized firearms in this particular town or city, but by my feet and car being there, I’m violating the law. Again, that’s problematic. That’s another example absolutely.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): It’s funny with firearms, you know, we judge everybody by the few, and I just don’t think that’s right in any circumstances. Thank you.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions or comments from other members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

REP. LANOUE (45TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Next, we’ll hear from Patrick Farley, and we’ll hear after that from Representative Lucy Dathan if she is around.

PATRICK FARLEY: Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom who maybe is at lunch now, ranking members Kissel, who I don’t see. Is that person here? And, Rebimbas, and other distinguished members of the joint committee on the Judiciary. My name is Patrick Farley. I am from West Hartford. I am here today. I’m affiliated with Connecticut Against Gun Action and IndivisibleCT. I am testifying in support of HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN HOME, HB 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN VEHICLES, HB 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS, and SB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT. My wife and I have a friend whose daughter was shot and killed when she was in her early 20s. The way that
kind of violence haunts the family and friends of the victim is indescribable. Weekly, I read the paper of multiple deaths caused by guns. For many years, when I would despair about gun violence in our country, I would think, well, at least I live in Connecticut, but that changed with Sandy Hook. Connecticut has been a leader in gun safety legislation. Not to go the full distance makes no sense. Why should anyone be able to get an email purchase 80 percent of the parts of a complete gun, which can then be assembled and is untraceable. Why would we not want to lock away from our children any guns we have in our homes or our cars. It is the most spurious of arguments to say that gun safety laws do not prevent gun violence. With that kind of logic, why even have laws at all? It’s like saying laws against murder don’t prevent all murders. Please take these final steps on gun safety for our state, let Connecticut go the full distance in being a model to other states on how to create a society, safe from gun violence for its citizens. I strongly support HB 7218, HB 7223, HB 7219, and SB 60, and urge you to favorably vote these bills out of Judiciary Committee, and I thank you for your time.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you very much. Questions or comments from members of the committee?

PATRICK FARLEY: Please, no. I’m not prepared. I’m not an expert. I’m just a concerned citizen.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Representative Dathan. She will be followed by James Ritchie.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Good afternoon, Senator Winfield. Happy birthday. Representative Stafstrom is not here, and to all the esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name’s Lucy Dathan. I
represent the 142nd District in Norwalk and New Canaan, and I’m here today in support of bills SB 60, House Bill 7218, House Bill 7219, House Bill 7223, and I’m also here opposing bills Senate Bill 940, House Bill 5227, and House Bill 5870. It’s hard to watch the news today and not hear about gun violence whether it’s in a place of worship, a movie theater, or even in an elementary school. There are more events that never even make the headlines. The incidents of guns getting into the wrong hands where accidental discharges can cause death or life-threatening injury. Many of these tragedies could be averted with common sense gun reform. I’ve been very proud of our state being a leader here in our country about our strength in our gun laws, but I feel that we need to take it a bit further as the last person just said. I feel strongly about Senate Bill 60 with the presentation of an open carry permit. I’m not going to go through all the bills – just a few.

We have sobriety checkpoints in our state. We will pull people over without any suspicion just to check whether they’re sober whether it’s on New Year’s Eve or any other time, and I feel that having the right of an officer to ask someone for their permit just seems in line with that sort of checkpoint analysis. I also really strongly believe in safe gun storage. Safe gun storage both in the home and cars can prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands. We cannot expect our eight-year-olds, our four-year-olds, our six-year-olds to be able to understand the implication of what guns can do. We can’t teach them at that young of an age, and I have teenagers and they make bad decisions, but at the same time, let’s try to prevent these decisions -- 1.7 million
American children live in a home with a gun. That’s just astounding. If we’re not ready to protect 1.7 million children in our country from guns, having access to them, I just -- I’m confused.

Nearly two-thirds of all gun deaths are by suicide. Many of these are the result of accessing an improperly stored weapon. We can protect our young by safely storing. [Bell]. And, I’m just gonna finish up and just say one of my dear friends -- 25-year friend is a gun collector. We have kids the same age. I trust my kids going over to his house with his variety of guns because they are stored in a safe. That safe also is locked. The kids don’t know the code. The father knows the code and the wife knows the code, and that’s it. The ammunition is stored separately, also locked up. Our -- we need to know that our kids who can make bad decisions can’t access guns, and this is one safe way to do it. I’m going to finish up, and I’m just going to say that I do support all 2nd Amendment rights, but I do think there is room here for strengthening our gun laws so that our guns don’t get into the wrong hands. Thank you very much, and let me know if there are any questions.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions from members? Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good afternoon.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Good afternoon.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you for your testimony. I just wanted to flush a few things out. In your testimony, you said that it should be similar to sobriety checkpoints. Are you aware that sobriety
checkpoints have to be advertised, and there’s actual notice that goes out regarding those?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Well, I would assume if we had this law in Connecticut, we would let people know that this law’s in existence.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Okay. But it’s not knowledge of DUI laws because a sobriety checkpoint would be for DUI laws. It’s that there’s going to be a checkpoint at a particular time in a particular location, so the analogy would be that there would be a particular day and a particular time that all individuals whether you have a permit to carry or not would be notified that this is going to be checked, so that’s the analogy, so I don’t think it fits in that regard, so I just wanted to clarify that for you; okay? Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Other questions or comments from other members? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thanks for coming in. I wanted to just follow up on the sobriety checkpoints as well. I’m glad you brought that up because it’s a very good example of why this show-your-permit law would be a violation of the -- of the constitution. You -- you’re aware that on a sobriety checkpoint the police can’t just pull over whoever they want. They can’t essentially choose who they pull over; right?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): I was under the impression a sobriety checkpoint was a random check.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, it’s specific -- it’s specifically -- it must be either every car or every
few cars. They can’t decide who they’re going to check and who they’re not because that would be searching somebody or detaining somebody without a reasonably articulable suspicion of a crime.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): But this is the same instance, and maybe I’m misunderstanding your question. If someone is carrying a gun just like someone is driving a car, it gives the police officer the same right to look at that person’s gun permit as a sobriety checkpoint has to look at the insurance documents and the car registration, driver’s license.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. That would be the case if the police were stopping every person or every third person or something like that.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Well, the police aren’t stopping anyone who’s not driving a car.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): No, but [Laughter], so in a sobriety checkpoint, they would need to stop every car or every two cars or every three cars. They could not just pick and say, we’re gonna stop that guy because we don’t think he belongs in this area and we don’t like the way he looks. They have to stop everybody. Now --

REP. DATHAN (142ND): So, then this law would give the officer the opportunity to stop anyone that has a gun.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, it would be everybody. It would be every person.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): No. But again, if the officer sees a gun, he has an option to pull that person, ask that person for their gun permit.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so --

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Just like I mean if you see an individual walking down the street you’re not going to have them go through the sobriety checkpoint ‘cause they’re not in a car.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, under your interpretation, the police would be required to stop and detain every single person that they saw with a firearm.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): No. Just like in a sobriety checkpoint, it doesn’t necessarily have to be every single car. It can be, you know, every so many cars. It’s just the same sort of ability that without a cause there’s no action or any other ability to determine whether someone’s driving under the influence or not because they’re going through a checkpoint. The police have the option to check that person out to make sure that they are okay.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Exactly, so it would have to be either every person with a gun or every other person or every third person. They could not say we’re gonna take this person because this person has no reasonably articulable suspicion that they’ve committed a crime, so the analogy with checkpoints I -- I would pause it is exactly why this law is unconstitutional because it -- you can’t choose which person you’re gonna check if you’re gonna do a sobriety checkpoint. I thank you for coming in. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Senator Champagne.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): I’m gonna go along the same lines a little bit. Is driving a privilege or a law?
REP. DATHAN (142ND): It’s a privilege.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): It’s a privilege.

Carrying a firearm, is that a privilege or a law?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Well, in our laws, a convicted felon is not allowed to have a gun.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay. Well, I’m talking about the average person because mainly when we pass a law it affects the law-abiding citizens. That’s who it affects. I mean the criminal they’re gonna go out, you’re right, they’re gonna steal a gun, and somebody’s already said it -- you can get into these safes with a pen. You can Google anything. You know, I knew nothing about fixing a diesel bulldozer. I looked it up on Google, and I got it working. [Laughter]. Then it threw a track, and I’m like how in the world am I gonna fix that?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Yeah.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): I Googled it, and I fixed it, and I drove this thing about a mile up a hill -- I should say a mountain -- but you know, there is no protection that’s gonna ultimately protect every single thing we own. You know, we want to protect our children. Education is a big part of that, but when we compare DUIs to carrying a firearm or stopping cars to carrying a firearm, the 2nd Amendment of the Constitution, which you said you support, allows people to carry a firearm. Nowhere in our Constitution does it say you can go drive a car.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): I think the cars were invented after the Constitution was -- [Crosstalk].
SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): You’re absolutely right. There’s a lot --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Hold on. Hold on a second. Rep -- Rep Dathan, I’ve asked this before. I would like for one person to ask the question, and then --

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Sorry.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Someone responds, so you’re not talking over each other.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): So, basically, there is a big difference between the two, and -- and we have to keep that in mind. Again, any laws -- and I’m going to stress this -- any laws we pass are against legal gun owners who have done everything right. Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Are there -- Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Representative Dathan for your testimony. I just have a brief question.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Sure.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): And, that’s whether you think education is sufficient. I think I would certainly join you in saying -- if I understand your testimony correctly -- that education is an important point and an important part of reducing gun violence, but given the statistic that you mentioned, I believe you said 1.7 million children live in homes with guns, and given what we’ve heard earlier today including the fact that locked guns lower the risk of unintentional injury or suicide by 73 percent -- that’s not abstract. It comes from
the American Academy of Pediatrics. Do you feel that education is enough or do you feel that this committee should go further?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): I think it should go further. I can’t believe, you know, maybe the Republican party is suggesting that we mandate gun instruction in school, and what that’s going to do to our school budgets, but I do believe that education’s important, but let’s also keep things out of the way. I mean it just is sensible to not allow access to guns by small children.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Representative. And, thank you, Chairman Winfield.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess I just needed to follow up on that last thing. We’re not accustomed to, you know, pin any particular party on any particular thing, but I guess the only thing I would say regarding firearms education in schools is previously already stated it’s actually a law that they may do it, and we’re finding obviously that -- and I think you’ve been through your testimony you would probably admit that guns are falling in the hands of young children, so educating them in one way or form certainly would be a good investment in that regard, so that’s my comment. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Representative. I was -- I kind of figured that’s where you were going, but I was going to say that generally we do not attribute what some members of a party says to the whole party.
REP. DATHAN (142ND): My apology. It was just based on the questioning that --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): I understand. I just want to make that clear for everybody. Senator Bergstein.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you, Representative Dathan, for your testimony. I wanted to follow up on something that you articulated, which I think is an important distinction between responsible gun owners and maybe other categories of gun owners, and you gave a particular example about your friend who has children the same age as your children, and you feel safe having your children at that person’s house because you know -- I assume it’s a he?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): It’s a he, yep.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): That he keeps all of his guns and ammunition under lock and key separately. How did you learn that that was his practice?

REP. DATHAN (142ND): We’ve been friends for 20 some odd years. I always have known that he has liked guns, and when his kids were born, we talked about this because we are very close friends, and I got where he was, he showed me his safe that he had invested in, and showed me the inside, showed me how it was very safe. And, as I said, I trust my teenage children over there unsupervised with their teenage children unsupervised because I know that this safe is truly that -- a safe that’s going to protect all the children there.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): So, this has been his practice for years?
REP. DATHAN (142ND): Yeah.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Maybe -- [Crosstalk].

REP. DATHAN (142ND): And, he’s a member of the NRA, and people that he talks with who he’s friendly with say exactly the same thing -- responsible gun owners know that we need to make sure that we need to keep guns out of hands of people that don’t know how to operate them. His sons have, you know, taken gun lessons, but he can’t guarantee that his son’s friends that come over to his house have that knowledge and that expertise, and how would he feel if an accident happened because he didn’t store his guns properly even though his son knows how to use them and the education would work with his son, it wouldn’t work with his friend’s son because they have not had that same training.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Right. So, different levels of education, different levels of exposure create different levels of risk.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Absolutely.

SENATOR BERGSTEIN (36TH): Thank you, and I just -- I just wanted to really hone in on that because I think that this is a new behavior that people are beginning to learn that they should adopt, which is the question of just asking -- asking someone, and I learned this actually from the Mom’s Demand Action Group and an educational forum they did about how to make sure that your children are safe when they go to someone else’s house, and it never used to be a customary thing to ask whether there were guns in the house, and if there were guns, how they were stored, but this has now become a critical question of safety -- a life or death question, so that
practice -- that kind of education is -- is really critical, and so I’m just really appreciative that you have actually already done it in your own life, and that you had a positive experience, and for those who start to ask those questions and don’t get the answers that comfort them, there will be changes -- behavioral changes I think, but it’s really important when we talk about education to talk about parent-to-parent questioning, and -- and then deciding whether the risk involved is actually worth it. but hopefully, what we’ll find when that sort of practice becomes customary is that most gun owners are like your friend and that they are responsible, and that they are proud to show all of the safety precautions they take to ensure not only safety of their own children but anybody else visiting their home, so thank you for sharing that with us.

REP. DATHAN (142ND):  Sure.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH):  Questions or comments from other members? Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):  Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. I just wanted to focus on the education aspect, and I think you were asked this before. You have an opposition to education as to safety basis for children?

REP. DATHAN (142ND):  Absolutely not. I just said I was talking more in terms of our educational budget is very pressured, and --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):  You talking locally, or?

REP. DATHAN (142ND):  I’m talking in our state, in our local communities, and adding an unfunded mandate of -- requiring students to have gun safety
training when some kids aren’t getting science classes five days a week, I think -- or gym class more than one or two days a week, doesn’t seem to make sense.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. I just -- you know I hear a lot of times you know if one life is saved that it’s worth it, and it’s just a little different for me to hear that we’re balancing science against something that may save a child’s life. If -- you know, I don’t want to put words in your mouth, but the NRA has a program Eddie Eagle -- stop, don’t touch, leave the area, tell an adult. I think that’s an appropriate sort of instruction for young people. We heard about a four-year-old child. Evidently, there was a very tragic situation. I’m sure that that wasn’t intentional. It was an accident, but perhaps if that child was given those four steps, we’d have another four-year-old child, so would you be in support of -- you know, we know there’s a statute right now that is supposed to be a program -- would you be in support of something like I just described to you, you know, stop, don’t touch, leave the area, tell an adult.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): I know I’ve done that as a parent to my children, and we’ve talked a lot about gun safety. I think it’s difficult sometimes when you have a four-year-old. I told my four-year-old daughter not to touch my makeup for example. The next day, the makeup bag was gone and it took me a week to find it because she hid it. Children do what children do, and we need to make sure that we protect them by locking things up that we don’t want them to get. Education I would always support education initiatives that would encourage education like you are referring to, but I do believe that we
need to make sure that the core classes that our kids need for survival and getting into their future careers like in math and science and English are supported, but I do believe as a society we need to take the step to make sure that kids are safe from getting their hands on weapons that shouldn’t -- that they shouldn’t have access to.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): But, if this law was to pass, and let’s just say that somebody didn’t follow the law, and there wasn’t the education that we’ve heard about here today, and a tragic event happened, the only thing we have left is prosecution of that person that ultimately, you know, the child got the gun. I just don’t see the negatives, you know. It seems that you’re not in support of those four steps being taught to people that potentially may be harmed, and I don’t want to put words in your mouth or anything like that.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): No. I’m absolutely in support --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Of those four things. I wouldn’t support an unfunded mandate to do that because I believe there are other avenues to protect our children, and I think asking our gun owners who decide to own guns to lock them up to keep our children safe and putting the onus on the adult and the responsible gun owner to do that is the right step here.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, last night I happened to go on the website for the Eddie Eagle program, and I got the -- the instruction guide for parents and instructors. It’ great. It’s many pages. It’s
well 15 pages for the parent or the instructor. There’s an activity booklet. It’s great, so I don’t see an unfunded mandate if those -- those things are -- are free, but I thank you for your testimony.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): I understand that the material might be free, but there is a finite hours in the school day, and we do need to teach children about math and science, and English.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You understand this program probably only takes about half hour, so -- but anyway. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions from other members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

REP. DATHAN (142ND): Thank you very much.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We’ll next hear from James Ritchie, followed by Representative Steinberg.

JAMES RITCHIE: Good afternoon, my name is James Ritchie. I’m from Bristol, Connecticut. I’m an NRA instructor, range safety officer. I also professionally perform part of the physical and digital security of companies. I actually have in my past jobs performed penetration tests, so that’s a little history on me. Bills I support -- I’ll give the three -- is 5870, 5227, 940. I support those. SB 60, 7218, 7219, and 7223, I oppose. I did submit electronic testimony because it was going to cover a lot more than what I could do in three minutes, so what I wanted to do was just kind of hit on a couple of things, and I think this is very important.
1976, I was a permit holder in this state. Because of the way the laws were being interpreted even thought we had a court case that finally ruled that Connecticut law was an open carry state, not that it was never was. It was always perceived not to be. I had my pistol permit revoked and my guns taken away from me in 1975 because that much of my shoulder holster showed below the line of the belt while I was sitting having coffee at a coffee shop at 10 o’clock at night, and that cost me $1500 dollars and had to go to Darien. I got my permit back, my guns back. That was 1976. Nineteen -- in 2016, I was having lunch with a bunch of friends at a Five Guys in Farmington -- 35 of us. I took my coat off, put it on the back of the counter, shirt creeped up above the coat that was behind, I went to get my food. A gentleman says, oh, your gun’s showing. I said, yeah, it’s an open carry state, and it’s legal to carry it open. He left the place, he called the police, we had five officers there. Yes, they did come and ask for permits. We all gave our permits because they had reasonable articulate suspicion because they received a phone call from the person, but they didn’t just look at our permits. They tied us up there for about 25 minutes, taking the permit, calling back to headquarters, validating that the permit was still active.

Why I’m bringing this up? Because this all starts to get into profiling. Back in the 70s, it was about profiling. Now, it’s again about profiling. Luckily, I’m not a minority. But could you imagine somebody, a minority, sitting at a coffee shop doing nothing but talking with their friends, and get picked on because they have a gun showing, and that’s what SB 60s gonna allow. Both Terry v. Ohio,
which we already heard [Bell], but recently Pinner v. State in 2017 was reaffirmed. Just because a person’s carrying a firearm does not give you a right to ask him for his permit. You have to have reasonable articulate suspicion. I just want to bring one other thing in. Seventy percent of the Firearms Act, and this by the Office of Legislative Research January 2018, 70 percent were plea bargained away dealing with firearms, and it was the five years previous. If we’re not going to enforce the laws that we have, we should not be creating laws that aren’t enforced because we can’t always deal with bringing it and challenging it in court. That’s a million dollars, and I think some members of the legislature have learned that we’re gonna pass a law whether we think it’s on the edge of being constitutional or not --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Mr. Ritchie --

JAMES RITCHIE: And, we’re gonna push that because we know you’re not gonna afford the billion dollars. I’m open for any questions.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you very much. Are there any questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. You mentioned that gun violations are plea bargained away. I know you were trying to hurry up to get within your three minutes. Can you tell me why that matters?

JAMES RITCHIE: Well, if we have these laws and the people that are committing these felonies are not being prosecuted, that just opened the door for more to go do it ‘cause they know they’re gonna get a
slap on the wrist, and they’re not gonna get prosecuted. However, that affects law-abiding citizens who do nothing wrong because of those. We have other laws that are now placed on us that we are not intended to do anything of that necessary. For example, like safe storage. It’s always been a thing of safe storage in the state, but defining what kind consists of appropriate safe storage, that’s open for interpretation, and the law when written is so broad and vague. Yes, I do have a gun safe in my truck because when you go to a post office you can’t carry a gun in with you. Yes, I have gun safes at my house, but those safes aren’t safe. Like I said, I did penetration testing. I walked in multibillion-dollar businesses and got into their data center with no tools. Gun locks, gun safes are great, it’s just the mentality. It’s not gonna stop somebody who’s going after it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. And, the other thing is you — you obviously mentioned Terry V. Ohio, but you mentioned another case. What was — what was that case, and what did that stand for?

JAMES RITCHIE: Thomas -- what is it -- Thomas Pinner V. State, and I believe it was down South. It was one of the circuit court cases 2017. A person was getting out of a taxi. His gun fell out of his pocket and fell on the curb, picked it up, put it in his pocket. The taxi driver called the police. The police came and -- and this whole case pursued. What it turned out was they actually said the police officer because they a) did not see the gun fall out of the pocket, but b) the guy was not doing anything of reasonable articulate suspicion that he was about to do a crime or was casing a joint as -- oh, what was the word -- I may have to
go to my other testimony. The one that I submitted. Too much paperwork. Sorry, people.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, the case stands for the proposition that what?

JAMES RITCHIE: The fact that just because somebody has a gun does not mean he’s doing something illegal.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, does it also address whether or not the police can detain him?

JAMES RITCHIE: It said if there’s a reasonable -- it actually came out and suddenly I just found it -- reasonable -- that criminal activity was afoot. In other words, reasonable articulate suspicion was the judge’s ruling. There was none. That’s why they dropped that whole thing and this case came out.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Senator Bradley.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): I just really want to state something for the record here, sir. You know, I agree with what you’re saying that there’s been profiling discrimination in America, and that’s probably existed since 1775, and that this law will probably not get rid of racism in America. I agree with you that most of the things that we legislate whether it’s marijuana or guns or whatever have you, when someone has a racist attitude about someone and unfortunately, may be empowered by the law to be an officer of the peace, and they might -- they might abuse somebody’s rights, but I believe the intent of this legislation isn’t to get rid of racism. The
intent of this legislation is to address a person who might not have a permit and is showing that he has a firearm, so whether that person’s white or black or brown or whatever race they may be, don’t you think it would make sense that if a police officer were to see a person showing a firearm, that he make a simple inquiry as to whether or not that person has a permit.

JAMES RITCHIE: But that does not require him to demand to show a permit. There’s many ways to do and having common sense and intelligence is enough to be able to start a conversation with a person, could violate that whole issue without requesting or demanding a permit, which then violates the 4th Amendment, and the Article 1, Section 7 of our own state Constitution to be secured in one person’s papers, property, and possessions, and that’s the point I was trying to drive home. We don’t need to have a law. What we need to do is open up communications and education. That could thwart lots of problems like the time at Five Guys -- 35 of us all open carry, and it was wintertime, we had coats on, we took them off. The education aspect does not just go to young people, but people need to realize just because somebody has a gun does not mean they’re gonna cause harm, and that’s where by making these laws and passing these laws, we’re reinforcing that that picture anytime you see a gun is a problem, and that is the issue of the problem of the laws I disagree with.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I understand, sir. Now, let me ask you this question, so maybe we can hopefully derive to a common ground. I’ll give it a shot. If you -- if you bought a brand-new weapon legally, would you like to show somebody that you bought that
brand-new weapon? Are you proud of that weapon you bought?

JAMES RITCHIE: Oh, I show them all the time.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): You show them all the time; right? Would you agree with me that in our country we glamorize firearms, cowboy movies, cops and robbers, whatever -- and any Hollywood settings -- you might say James Bond, police movies we glamorize firearms; would you agree that that’s the case in America?

JAMES RITCHIE: Yep. I have to admit some of the firearms I bought was purposely because they were in the movies.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): Because they were in the movies. Now, would you agree with me that just the same way you might like to show off a firearm and thank God you have a permit that allows you to do that, there are people who don’t have permits who also like to show off that they have firearms? That they’re proud of their firearms as well, and they want to -- [Crosstalk].

JAMES RITCHIE: Well, let’s -- let’s -- let’s first of all talk about personality traits and human traits. If I am a known felon and I am showing the weapon, what is the first thing that’s gonna happen when a police officer shows? That person’s gonna bolt. A licensed carry permit holder will stand there and have the conversation with them because they’re proud of their hobby and their sport and their knowledge and is willing to share it with those people; so therefore, making a law to go after those who are proud and willing to discuss and making them look like a criminal is no better.
SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): So, you don’t see that we could probably tort crime --

JAMES RITCHIE: No.

SENATOR BRADLEY (23RD): By the pride -- okay. All right. Thank you, sir.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony. Next up will be Representative Steinberg. Representative, just identify who’s with you for the record.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH): I will. I am State Representative Jonathan Steinberg from the 136th District. I am here today with Melissa Kane, a constituent and a good friend, who I will seed much of my time to after I make a couple statements. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and it’s good to see you and the ranking members and vice-chair as well. I’ll just make a couple comments, and then I’ll hand it off. First of all, it’s in my opinion ghost guns were created in order to obviate existing law; and therefore, should be banned. Secondly, I will say that in many instances guns in the home are an accident waiting to happen. There’s plenty of data that indicates that it’s much more likely an injury or death will occur to a family member or a visitor than an intruder; and therefore, safe gun laws that take advantage of the current technology, which could certainly be improved upon I’m sure such that it is not so easy to break into. Our indeed smart contributory measures to protect citizen’s safety. They’re not the whole answer, but much of the laws that we pass in this legislature are contributory to protecting people, not a solution in and of
themselves, and with that, I’ll pass it on to Melissa.

MELISSA KANE: Good afternoon, Chairman Stafstrom and distinguished committee members. My name is Melissa Kane, and I’m a selectwoman for the town of Westport as well as the President of the Board of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I’m here today on my own behalf and on behalf of the board of CAGV to testify in support of the passage of HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME, HB 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF A PISTOL OR REVOLVER IN THE MOTORVEHICLE, and HB 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS. CAGV has been working to reduce gun violence in Connecticut for 25 years. In that time, we have worked effectively with state, health, and law enforcement agencies to track data, and to increase awareness of and educate the public on gun safety measures including unsafe storage, and we have worked closely with legislators to help pass every single major piece of common sense gun safety legislation, and to that end, Connecticut is a leader, and we have some of the best and most sensible gun laws in the country, but there is still very much to do. We still have an average of about 15 gun-related deaths a month in this state. There are loopholes and ineffective laws that must be redressed in order to ensure the safety of our citizens and our law enforcement officers. Every one of these bills represent a reasonable step toward keeping guns out of the hands of those that are not legally licensed to own or use them. Unfortunately, that is not a risk that we have eradicated yet, and separately, these bills have the power to make Connecticut safer for multiple sources of gun violence on intentional shootings, mass
shootings, suicides, and crimes committed with firearms that are stolen.

When you look out in the Chamber, there’s a sea of incoming and outgoing orange, green, and red shirts, and they’re gun violence prevention advocates, and they’re going to remind you of the merits of these four bills and present important and incontrovertible statistics, but I’m here to ask you to keep in mind that gun safety and prevention [Bell] of gun violence is a priority of the vast bipartisan majority of residents of the state of Connecticut. Eight percent of the candidates endorsed by CAGV in the November election were elected. Please keep in mind that that majority believes that there is much more we should be doing to keep our citizens safe. HB 7218, HB 7223, and HB 7219 are sensible and rationale steps in that direction.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

MELISSA KANE: I urge you to support them. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon. You’re a first selectmen?

MELISSA KANE: I’m not a first selectman, no. I’m a member of the board of selectmen.


MELISSA KANE: Westport.

MELISSA KANE:  Thank you.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you for your testimony.

MELISSA KANE:  Thank you.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):  I just wanted to ask you about 7219, the ghost gun --

MELISSA KANE:  Yeah.  Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH):  Bill. You know, I heard a lot of -- I heard everything that you had to say. How would this prevent those things that you were talking about in your mind?

MELISSA KANE:  Which things?  How would it address --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, you said the guns --

MELISSA KANE:  Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): On the street is one of the things, so how would --

MELISSA KANE: Oh, yeah. Mass shootings, crimes committed with firearms that are stolen. How would it track that? Well, I guess when you have guns that are coming into the state that don’t have serial numbers, they are hard to trace, and if they get into the hands of the black market, right, and they’re used to commit crimes, there’s no ways to trace them, and that also makes things much more difficult; right? So, people who are intent on committing crimes would certainly like to get their hands-on guns if they don’t have a permit; right? So, the --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): All right. So, just --
MELISSA KANE: Criminal element being able to get the -- these guns that are not as well regulated as our state laws would have them be.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, just take me down that road.

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You know, a firearm is in New York, and it doesn’t have a serial number, and one of the things that in your mind your looking to prevent here is from that firearm coming into Connecticut with being -- I guess being sold to somebody in Connecticut --

MELISSA KANE: Yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Or transported into Connecticut. How does this law prevent that activity?

MELISSA KANE: Well, there are a lot of things that this law prevents. Someone -- under this law, someone can no longer go on a website like ghostguns.com and buy an almost -- an almost -- I guess an 80 percent --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): We’re talking specifically -- I had asked you specifically about this --

MELISSA KANE: Sorry.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, you had said about a gun coming --

MELISSA KANE: Oh, sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Into Connecticut, so I gave you a scenario.
MELISSA KANE: Well, I’ll give you a scenario. So, this January, a Southington man was convicted of trying to sell a ghost gun on arms list, so he had that in his possession.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so that’s --

MELISSA KANE: So, it did come into the state --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, that’s presently --

MELISSA KANE: Happening.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Illegal.

MELISSA KANE: Correct. No, that is not illegal.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

MELISSA KANE: He was picked up for it. He was convicted of trying to sell it, but he was able to get it, so it was already in the state, and then there were other -- I guess in Willimantic there was a teen who was arrested after selling multiple guns and telling the undercover agent that there were huge demand out there.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. There were presently -- we’ll go with the Southington one.

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You know, ‘cause that’s where you brought me.

MELISSA KANE: Yep.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): At what portion -- at what point would this bill stop that activity because we already know that his intent to transfer that is already illegal, right, so --

MELISSA KANE: At the purchase point.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): At what purchase point?

MELISSA KANE: When someone attempted to buy a ghost gun -- a gun that was not yet completed, was not going to have a serial number, and did not need to be permitted. At that point of purchase, that is when the --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): But I’m just trying to get --

MELISSA KANE: Yeah. That’s exactly when, yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You know, I enjoy the exchange. I’m just trying to you know -- potentially in my mind, there’s two points of purchase -- if I may?

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): There is the one where the Southington individual acquires the 80 percent.

MELISSA KANE: That is what I’m talking about.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Not the intended purchase --

MELISSA KANE: No. It’s when -- it’s when --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Intended purchase thereafter.

MELISSA KANE: It’s when the gun or the not quite finished gun comes into this state and bypasses our laws, which require that guns have serial numbers and are permitted, and people who own -- who own guns need to have licenses for owning those guns.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, from your perspective, that 80 percent firearm that doesn’t have a serial number, that should be illegal under this law?
MELISSA KANE: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, what if that person is lawfully allowed to possess firearms?

MELISSA KANE: Then why would they go to the trouble of getting a gun that is not legal for them to possess?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Why do people build model airplanes? It’s, you know --

MELISSA KANE: I don’t think this is -- this is -- I don’t think it’s apples to apples.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

MELISSA KANE: I don’t think it’s about a model airplane. I think there are -- people talked earlier today about muskets and other antique guns, which I believe are grandfathered into many, many of our -- of our laws in this state that -- that you know say who and what type of guns can be owned. I don’t -- I don’t believe that it -- it should be legal to assemble untraceable guns at home without passing a background check.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

MELISSA KANE: And, without getting a gun permit.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, how would that work? So, now I could get the 80 percent gun or I’d have to request permission to buy that out of state. I’m just trying to figure out how --

MELISSA KANE: I think it would be illegal to purchase an 80 percent made gun.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so no matter what?

MELISSA KANE: Under this law, yes.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, no. I’m just --

MELISSA KANE: You can’t --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

MELISSA KANE: Well, you’re prohibiting -- if someone is licensed to own a gun, they will attentively purchase a gun through legal means, and this would not be a legal means of doing it, right. Or purchase a gun kit under legal means.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, and what is -- ‘cause presently, you would have no legal means to get a gun kit; correct?

MELISSA KANE: I’m not sure that that’s true. I don’t know.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, what -- I’m just -- ‘cause we’re going through this --

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, that’s one of the things you’re looking to prevent.

MELISSA KANE: Yep. I am looking to prevent guns from getting into the hands who should not have access to guns, and I am looking to prevent loopholes in our laws.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so I’m --

MELISSA KANE: Which say that gun owners need a license; right?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, and presently, we have laws that say that, but presently, an 80 percent gun you can’t shoot anything out of; right?

MELISSA KANE: Not yet, you can’t.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, I don’t -- otherwise, it wouldn’t be an 80 percent gun quite frankly.

MELISSA KANE: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): But -- ‘cause then it’d be a 100 percent gun, but I’m just trying to figure out -- I mean if I have an eligibility certificate, which is not a pistol permit, but allows me to lawfully go into a gun store and purchase a long gun; should I be able to purchase an 80 percent gun from out of state? I’m -- I’m not a barred person. Why wouldn’t that be allowed here?

MELISSA KANE: I think that would be allowed here. It says in the law that sellers of unfinished receivers and completion parts are not required to be licensed firearm dealers, and buyers are not subject to background checks or waiting periods. 3D guns are ghost guns; right? So, ghost guns -- this is -- this is -- currently, these are exempted from federal regulation; right? So, we’re talking about making sure that sellers of these things are regulated. That’s all we’re saying. They need to be regulated. We’re talking about the regulations that already exist in our state, and making sure that -- so, from start to finish, all aspects are covered.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): But you were talking about -- no. With all due respect --

MELISSA KANE: Okay. [Chuckling].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): We were talking about the two transactions, right, and you were looking to prevent the purchase, so that wouldn’t be binding the seller; right? Under my scenario that we started out with, the seller’s in New York, right.
MELISSA KANE: Okay.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, you were just talking about the seller, and I thought before that we were talking about the buyer because in Southington 80 percent --

MELISSA KANE: Well, you asked me another question. You asked me about someone buying a gun kit -- a licensed person, so I misunderstood. I’m sorry.


MELISSA KANE: Yeah, so the buyer -- right, we were talking about the buyer in Southington or Willimantic, yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, under the -- under this law, one who is an eligible person would still be able to purchase a ghost gun kit or not?

MELISSA KANE: No. No.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so --

MELISSA KANE: No. No, not a ghost gun. Specifically -- ghost guns are untraceable guns created from unfinished receivers. Presumably, if you’re going to buy a legal -- and I -- I am not an expert on this, but I would assume if there is a legal means for buying a kit gun that that gun comes with a serial number, and that is something that someone with a license would purchase. I don’t know that for a fact.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

MELISSA KANE: But I’m not trying to keep hobbyist from being able to create, you know, a gun with a serial number. Again, I’m not trying to keep legal
firearms from out of the hands of people who are legally able to own them.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, that’s what I’m trying to --'

MELISSA KANE: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I’m trying to get to here.

MELISSA KANE: Yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Because in the scenario that I was trying to run with, I have a license, I can go to a gun store and purchase because I am not a prohibited person. I may have a pistol permit, so I’ve passed the suitability standard as well, so I’ve got some better credentials than most people in the state of Connecticut. This law would prevent me from -- as a hobbyist, purchasing an 80 percent gun from out of state and putting that together for my own personal use.

MELISSA KANE: Yes, because it’s an untraceable gun.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, although I have no intention to ever sell that, although --

MELISSA KANE: What if you’re robbed? What if someone comes and takes that gun?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): What if I’m robbed --


MELISSA KANE: I’m sorry. I know I’m not allowed to do that. I apologize.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative -- yeah, you guys are doing great.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I mean the what if can apply to anything, you know, quite frankly.

MELISSA KANE: I guess that’s true.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): But I mean you’ve testified in support of other bills here today. You know, you would have the ghost gun be locked up, right, to try and prevent it being stolen.

MELISSA KANE: I would definitely -- I don’t want the ghost gun there. I don’t want anyone to have a gun without a serial number. It’s not allowed in this state. It’s illegal.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): It is allowed in this state quite frankly in that firearms that were manufactured prior to --

MELISSA KANE: Before -- agreed.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): 1961, and there are millions --

MELISSA KANE: But we are talking about firearms being produced now.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Folks. Folks. I’m gonna jump in again, and we’re getting to the point of we’re arguing as opposed to asking questions, so I would just would remind members of the public and members of the committee as well we still have a very lengthy list of folks ahead of us who’d like to testify. Let’s ask our questions certainly, but let’s try to keep the arguing to a minimum.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for refereeing. With all due respect. You said that it’s presently illegal for one to have a gun without a serial number?
MELISSA KANE: One that has been produced after 1968. I believe that is the -- what you just said.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. What -- I mean to my knowledge I can possess a firearm without a serial number. At the point that there’s a problem legally, is if I go to sell it to someone else is I believe the status of the current law.

MELISSA KANE: I don’t know for sure. I would have to double check.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, I do a lot of this stuff.

MELISSA KANE: I’ll take your word for it then.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You know, and I enjoyed the exchange, so thank you.

MELISSA KANE: Me too.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative O’Neill.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Thank you. Focusing on the ghost gun bill -- focusing on the ghost gun bill, we had legislation similar to this last year, and where the legislation fell apart or floundered, in my eyes, was in the effort to define the thing that is in Section 19, and if you’re looking at the bill, it’s starting in line 100 -- any unfinished and as quote “frame or lower receiver as the term is defined in this section” and then when you jump over to the definition of frame or lower receiver means that part of a firearm that provides the action or housing for the hammer, bolt, breechblock, firing mechanism, and enclose a lower receiver blank
casting or machine part that requires further machining or molding to be used as part of a functional firearm, and which is designed or intended to be used in the assembly as that term is defined in another section of the statute that’s referenced. And, the problem is with these definitions because it talks about any unfinished lower receiver, and then it goes onto describe something part of which is -- part of that definition is describing the receiver as pretty much defined in federal law, and then kind of drifts off into -- or requires further work so that it’s both an actual lower receiver that you could insert into a firearm, and then something else that’s not there yet, although there’s nothing indicating an 80 percent. As I understand the 80 percent is really a sales slogan. It doesn’t really tell you 80 percent of the work hours have been completed, and only 20 percent need to be done, or 80 percent of the machining that’s to be removed has been removed if you’re gonna do machining. Eighty percent is just new and improved -- it’s just an advertising slogan kind of.

So, that’s where there’s a problem here as I see it in this kind of -- this piece of legislation because the federal government is the one that puts serial numbers on things, and they are the ones who have defined that the lower receiver is sort of the key integral part of the gun, so when I was asking questions for example of a police officer based on the definition, and I said I’m walking down the street holding up a piece of metal, a block of metal that’s been partially machine, and you see me holding it over my head, so it’s in plain sight and visible. You was a police officer and you arrested
me for that, and if not this piece of metal, which piece of metal on the way to becoming a final lower receiver that under federal law requires a serial number to be affixed to it, and he couldn’t answer that question based on this -- these kinds of definitions because I have -- nobody really knows at what point the thing becomes a lower receiver or even an unfinished lower receiver and all the other things that are talked about in the definition, so -- and I know that you’re not an expert, but part of the problem with this is getting a definition that is going to inform the person who is to be arrested or who might violate the law how to void violating the law -- to not become in violation of the law, so what exactly do you think it takes to -- to have a machined lower receiver -- what is it -- what is it -- you say we want to prevent people from --

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Having guns without serial numbers. This is the integral part of the gun under U.S. law and definitions. At what point can you -- can you tell me at what point someone violates the law when they’ve machined a piece of metal?

MELISSA KANE: Sure. So, I disagree with you. I mean I don’t see a problem with the language, and I’m not sure the nuances of percentage of being finished matter that much. I think what matters is buying someone with the intent to create a weapon that is untraceable, right, which in our state goes against our laws, so if you can prove that someone has bought a lower receiver, whether it’s 79 percent or 80 percent, I mean there actually is -- you know there are regulations written in this bill. If -- if you had bought that with the intent and it can be
proved of creating a weapon -- an untraceable weapon, I believe that that is when you are breaking the law according to this -- to this bill.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): See, the problem is that most of the time we infer, and -- you’re not going to be able to read people’s minds.

MELISSA KANE: No, but you can certainly see where they buy their -- I mean you know if people are buying guns from ghostgun.com and these receivers come with directions on how to turn them into a gun, and they have, you know, I think that that’s kind of, you know, clear that that’s their intent.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Well, the thing is that you’re -- I get where you’re going --

MELISSA KANE: Especially if that’s illegal. Sorry. Especially, if we make that illegal. That’s a deterrent from doing that.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Right, but the thing is that what you’re -- you’re basing the idea that you purchase someone as the basis of inferring the intent, and -- and the thing is that, you know, we -- we have sale with intent because we have -- we don’t say is this enough marijuana or enough cocaine to supply two people, four people. We actually say this many ounces.

MELISSA KANE: Right.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Not a bunch, not a whole lot, not more than the average guy, which is the kind of language we’re dealing with here because we don’t have the kind of specifics. If we flip it around and say, okay, it’s not sale with intent but what you’re saying is we have a definition of purchase
with intent, and then the purchase with intent is to be inferred from the fact that you bought it from a particular dealer or you bought something that has a particular type of advertisement tacked onto it saying ghost gun 80 percent, so if they change the name to ghost gun to spirit gun -- I mean does that fix it to they are no longer subject?

MELISSA KANE: I don’t think it -- again, so -- I’m sorry to interrupt. I don’t know if you were done, but I would say for me it is about you know making it possible to assembly untraceable guns at home, right, so stopping that, making it illegal to buy the ingredients [Chuckle] for making untraceable guns at home.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Okay.

MELISSA KANE: Or, well maybe not just at home, but to make untraceable guns for anyone, not someone -- you know, someone who doesn’t potentially have a permit -- a license.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): The problem is that if you were to Google luty. Are you familiar with that word? L-U-T --

MELISSA KANE: Say that again.


MELISSA KANE: I’m not sure I am.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Luty gun. He was an Englishman who didn’t like the very strict gun control laws that they had in England, and what he did was he designed and built and got arrested for building and demonstrating that you could build a submachine gun out of parts commonly found in a
plumbing supply house, and the plans for this are all over the internet.

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): And, plans for other similar kind of do-it-yourself, make-it-at-home weapons are readily available, so if you’re objective is to prevent anyone from -- regardless of who they are, from being able to manufacture in their own basement or workshop or machine shop, that’s -- that cat is out of the bag and long gone because it’s all over the internet how you can do this.

MELISSA KANE: You’re right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I think you made a very good point, Representative. I’m just -- as I’m thinking out loud here, I think you’re right. I think we do need to put serial numbers on all parts that relate to a gun, and that way we won’t have to worry about these federal distinctions. That’s a really good solution, and I would also add that England seems to have a lot for gun-related deaths than we do in our country, so maybe their policy is working pretty well.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Here’s -- here’s the thing. If based on the -- what I just described -- the so-called Luty firearm, you’d have to every single pipe that’s manufactured, every single piece of metal -- sheet metal that’s manufactured in this country that you could go to Home Depot or some place and buy, would have to have a serial number.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Dandy idea.
REP. O'NEILL (69TH): And -- and -- and I understand -- I think I understand that you’re joking -- but it demonstrates --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): It’s hard to tell with me sometimes.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): I’m sorry?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): It’s hard to tell with me sometimes.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): But I think that what I’m describing here illustrates the difficulty. If -- if we could define these types of weapons that are being sold so that someone could easily with -- we could define a certain number of hours or minutes of work or someway -- and I’m not sure if we can -- but if we could define it, you know, that would be different. What we’ve got now is a definition, especially the one that’s here now that’s sort of this mish mash of actual receivers, which would require federal stamping of a serial number, and -- and things that are not that are something less, but we can’t tell exactly how much less, and we will never know for sure until you get arrested and go to court and maybe appeal your case in Supreme Court, and then you find out whether this particular piece of metal was machined to the point that you have violated the law. My guess is at that point the court might very well say that this is a law that is void for the vagueness of it. That you can’t really know for sure what it is, and -- and I don’t think we should be passing laws like that -- that where no one really knows for sure until a Supreme Court or some intermediate court makes a ruling as to what it is.
MELISSA KANE: Well, may I respond?

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): Sure.

MELISSA KANE: So, I don’t believe that’s actually the case here. I believe that this act is to ban guns without serial numbers and to regulate so-called ghost guns, and I believe that this legislature -- the Judiciary Committee and the legislature will have the appropriate language so that it is clear what exactly is covered, and I’m comfortable with that. I -- you know your point about guns being able to be made out of things you can get at a -- you know plumbing supply company, yeah, I don’t think we’re ever going to 100 percent stop the flow of the -- I guess the creation of illegal arms or -- but we should really be doing our best to make sure if we can that these guns aren’t being produced when -- when we know that there’s an intent out there to do it. Well, as I said before, if we can get to a definition that’s in my mind at least enforceable and puts people on proper notice as to what it is that constitutes an illegal action on their part, you know, I think then we’ll have something to work with.

MELISSA KANE: Okay.

REP. O'NEILL (69TH): I don’t think we’re there yet, and I’m not sure how we get there because of the difficulties of drawing the kinds of definitions that would need to be there to get so that people are properly apprised of what it is that they are violating, and so the police officers know and prosecutors and juries can all be told this is what a violation of the law really means, and you don’t have to sort of guess as to what it is, so thank you, Mr. Chairman.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Representative. Further questions? Representative Dubitsky, followed by Senator Sampson.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. A couple of things. First off, you mentioned a statistic of 15 people killed a month in gun-related --

MELISSA KANE: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): In gun-related incidences. Where did that statistic come from?

MELISSA KANE: The state coroner’s office.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Does that include police shootings?

MELISSA KANE: That includes suicides, homicides, all gun-related deaths.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so police shootings?

MELISSA KANE: I guess, yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Does it include justifiable homicides?

MELISSA KANE: I’m not sure. What justifiable homicides are you talking about?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, if somebody breaks into your house, points a shotgun at you, and you’re forced to defend yourself?

MELISSA KANE: I believe it includes all gun-related death.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, that came from the state coroner?

MELISSA KANE: The state coroner.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Is that published somewhere?

MELISSA KANE: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Where would I find that?

MELISSA KANE: I can send it to you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): That will be great. Thank you.

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): My -- my questions now involve an issue of timing because one of the things you’re asking for, you’re supporting is to -- to prevent the -- the -- the purchases of a firearm or a -- a piece of metal that is not a firearm and to categorize it as a firearm based on the intent to manufacture it into a gun, so -- and we had some other testimony about this earlier, so I’ve got a -- just a bare block of aluminum, and I -- let’s say I purchase it with the intent to manufacture a firearm. Under this bill, does that block of metal become a firearm?

MELISSA KANE: It -- I remember discussing this with you last year, and yes, I believe that if a material that is used to create a weapon, a firearm, is bought with the intent to turn it into a firearm, with instructions, with intent, yes, it is absolutely to be considered under this law and under this bill that we are advocating for, as a potential firearm that is not -- that has no serial number.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, it wouldn’t be a potential firearm -- [Crosstalk].

MELISSA KANE: No. No. So -- so, you’re right.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It would be defined as a -- [Crosstalk].

MELISSA KANE: Actually --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It -- it would be defined as a firearm under this law; right?

MELISSA KANE: Yes. Fine.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, if -- if I buy this block of steel -- a block of aluminum, I have it sitting on my workbench, and I’m -- I’m planning on turning it into a gun -- into a fully functioning firearm, you believe that this block should be considered under the law to be a firearm as it sits there?

MELISSA KANE: Again, if I -- if I find or if law enforcement finds that the block of steel was purchased with the intent of creating a firearm that is untraceable and has no serial number, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Now, two scenarios stem from that. One is what if I intend to make it into a firearm that has a serial number?

MELISSA KANE: Why would you purchase a piece of steel when -- to create a gun if there’s a law saying you shouldn’t do it that way? Does that make sense? Is that -- is that a scenario that’s likely? I just want to know.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, other -- other members here have discussed people who build firearms as a hobby, so I want to follow the law. I want to make this thing into a gun, and I want to get a serial number for it.
MELISSA KANE: I believe there are means for purchasing kits or -- materials for making guns that are legal in a legal fashion. This is talking about a specific type of -- a type of ban on guns or you know, again, the frame or the lower receiver that is manufactured and specifically marketed to evade state laws.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well --

MELISSA KANE: To evade -- to evade the -- you know state and federal laws. It’s marketing -- you know somebody who is purchasing someone -- excuse me -- something with the intent of making a gun to bypass the laws of the state.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, this bill --

MELISSA KANE: So, that’s where I see it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. This bill says nothing about marketing, does it?

MELISSA KANE: I didn’t -- I’m not sure I follow.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, you said this bill is designed to prevent the purchase of things that are marketed in this state to bypass the law.

MELISSA KANE: They -- they --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): This doesn’t say anything about marketing, does it?

MELISSA KANE: I believe that the regulation that we’re talking about is on materials purchased that have been marketed like on a site like ghostguns.com to create a ghost gun. That is marketing.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but --
MELISSA KANE: I mean they are marketed to create a gun. The reason it’s called a ghost gun is because it’s untraceable.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but under my scenario, you said that my block of aluminum sitting on my bench under this law would already be a firearm.

MELISSA KANE: No. What I said was if your block of aluminum, which I would imagine would be very difficult to -- I -- I see many times, you know -- and when I think about this law I think about people getting materials that have already been partially turned into a piece of a firearm as opposed to a big block of aluminum, but for this example, a block of aluminum that has been purchased with the intent of turning it into a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, that would be a firearm? That block of metal?

MELISSA KANE: I guess so, yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so --

MELISSA KANE: If there is intent and it has been purchased in order to bypass our laws, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so my intent is -- so again, I’m gonna go back. So, my intent is not to bypass the law. My intent is to follow the law and get a serial number for the firearm that I create.

MELISSA KANE: So, I would say you wouldn’t actually try and buy that material illegally. You would actually buy it in a way that is -- there’s a legal way to go into a gun store or a hobby store and buy the pieces needed to create that firearm that you’re going to be put a serial number on, that’s your, you know, hobby.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but I want to make it out of a block of metal. Why should I not be able to do that?

MELISSA KANE: I suppose if you bought that block of metal at a place where it’s okay to buy it or it’s legal to buy it in a way that’s legal to buy, then it’s okay.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, how would that be?

MELISSA KANE: I think it’s pretty clear from the bill that we’re talking about ghost guns. We are talking about -- the language in the bill is pretty clear.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It says any unfinished --

MELISSA KANE: Lower receiver --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Excuse me.

MELISSA KANE: No.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It says any unfinished frame or lower receiver.

MELISSA KANE: Right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, if I’ve got a block of metal that I have not yet finished into a frame or lower receiver, that would be considered as sitting there -- just six sides --

MELISSA KANE: I’m comfortable with that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Block of metal would be considered a firearm.

MELISSA KANE: If you have intent to turn it into a firearm that is unlicensed and with no serial number and untraceable, yes.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, again, all right. We agree that far.

MELISSA KANE: Yeah. [Laughing].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Now, I’m gonna take it to the next step, and say what if my goal with that block of aluminum is not to bypass the laws of this state but to create a firearm that I get a serial number for, is it now a firearm?

MELISSA KANE: Well, I would say it’s a firearm, but a firearm with a serial number, so it changes how it falls under this law.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, is it now -- is it your belief that under this law I would need to get a serial number for the block?

MELISSA KANE: [Laughing] Probably, yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so --

MELISSA KANE: I think that’s a great idea.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so I go and get a serial number for this block of -- of aluminum, and I stamp it right on there. Now, this block of aluminum, just a square block of aluminum has a serial number on it. Now, I start machining it into a firearm. I’m gonna machine the serial number right off, aren’t I?

MELISSA KANE: I guess you’ll have to put it back in. You’ll stamp it in another place.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But isn’t it illegal to take the serial number off of a firearm under federal law? [Laughter]. I -- I --
MELISSA KANE: I hear what you’re saying. I -- I -- it’s a riddle.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Exactly. It is a riddle in the law that we are creating an absurdity that -- that forces people to violate federal law.

MELISSA KANE: I don’t agree with that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Let me give you another scenario. I’ve got this block of aluminum sitting there that you are considering a firearm. Okay, it’s a firearm because I intend to create a firearm out of it, but it’s just a block of aluminum, and my friend walks in the door, and he says, I need a good paperweight. I want that. Can you -- can you give that to me? I say, sure take it. He’s now got it. Under your scenario, it is a firearm.

MELISSA KANE: Not if he does not have the intent to turn it into a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Exactly.

MELISSA KANE: But you did. You bought it with the intent to turn it into a firearm.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Guys, guys, guys. All right. I’m gonna jump in. I’m gonna jump in, and we’ve moved -- we’ve moved beyond the realm of question/answer into getting argumentative again. Let’s bring this back.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): We’ve been down this road before, Representative. Let’s move on.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): This is -- this is an important point. The point is that the -- that this
-- this block of aluminum when I purchased it, you’re saying it was a firearm, but if I give it to somebody else, it’s now no longer a firearm because that person has no intent, so the object itself becomes a firearm or not based on the intent of the person who’s in possession of it, so how does that -- how does one prove the intent?

MELISSA KANE: Well, again, I think I have faith in my legislators to come up with language that accurately and intelligently looks at all realistic scenarios and makes sure that we have regulations and wording that makes sense.

REP. STEINBERG (136TH): If I could just add it seems to me you’ve had this piece of aluminum for some time now. I would really appreciate it if you would give it to somebody else, so we can move on to other scenarios. [Laughter].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. I appreciate that.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Folks, folks, folks. I’m gonna -- I’m gonna jump back in again, okay. Let’s try to focus back on the bill. Let’s try to cut down on the argumentative nature of this. I understand folks have set -- have set positions one way or another on this particular piece of legislation. If the good Representative would like to talk about language after we finish the public hearing, he’s welcome to do that, but let’s continue to move along, please.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): All right. So, are you acknowledging that the language in the current bill because it allows itself and lends itself to absurd
results -- are you acknowledging that the language as written in this bill is insufficient?

MELISSA KANE: No. I don’t think I am. I’m -- perhaps, in your scenario with just a block of aluminum, but it’s pretty -- it’s clearly defined I believe in the -- the way the legislation is written that a frame or lower receiver, which is what is referred to in the legislation means the part of a firearm that provides the action or housing for the hammer, bolt, or breech lock and firing mechanism, and includes a frame or lower receiver blank casting or machined body that requires further machining or molding to be used as a part of a functional firearm in which is designed and intended to be used in the assembly as that term is defined in another section. So, I think that language is certainly there. Maybe there are other areas that I mentioned that are nuanced with regard to your block of aluminum, and maybe those need to be addressed as well, but I think it’s pretty clearly defined.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Do you know what a lower receiver blank is?

MELISSA KANE: I know what a lower receiver is. I don’t know what a lower receiver blank is.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Would it surprise you to learn that a lower receive blank is a block of aluminum?

MELISSA KANE: Well, then there you have it. It’s in there. [Laughter]. It’s defined. [Chuckle].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So -- so that is a firearm?
MELISSA KANE: Well, I’ve been saying I think it’s a firearm since we started talking about this.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but if I give it to somebody else without intent, then how does it become no longer a firearm?

MELISSA KANE: I think if you give somebody a paperweight and it’s just a paperweight, it’s just a paperweight.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

MELISSA KANE: If you buy -- I’m -- you know, we’ve talked about this for years. If you buy this -- I guess I’ll call it by its correct name now -- this lower receiver blank with the intent of machining it into a full gun, it’s pretty clear that that’s what this law is talking about.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. All right. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MELISSA KANE: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you Representative and madam selectwoman for being here today.

MELISSA KANE: Thank you.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I’m gonna tell you this day has been kind of rough for me just seeing the hostility in which people on all sides of this debate seem to treat each other, and I think that’s unfortunate, because I am quite certain that we are all on the same side when it comes to the notion of wanting to prevent crime and prevent tragedies, especially we heard about this morning. And, I
don’t understand why -- since we’re just arguing over different ways to maybe make the world a safer place and fight crime that people have to mock each other or think that they’re being somehow, you know, intentionally difficult when we’re trying to get to the root of the issue before us, and I’ll just say that I think there’s a lot of assumption by folks that are not familiar with the firearms and the firearm laws in our state and our country that are getting in the way of some results. So, I don’t know how to word some of these things as a question, and that’s my -- my obligation here, and it’s difficult sometimes when you are trying to get certain things on the record to say to people so that they have something to respond to. I guess the first thing I would ask is would either of you acknowledge that firearms have a place in our society?

MELISSA KANE: Yes. I believe so, absolutely.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): So, you would acknowledge that firearms are often used for good and not just evil?

MELISSA KANE: Yes, absolutely.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. If you have a problem and you call the police, you’re calling them because they have a firearm as one of the reasons and they could protect you potentially.

MELISSA KANE: They could protect you and if God forbid and it’s at all necessary, they are licensed to use their firearms, but --

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, you would acknowledge that there are many, many very good people in our society that own firearms and use them lawfully?
MELISSA KANE: Absolutely. Dear, dear friends included.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Do you -- can you see why people who feel threatened when these laws come forward sometimes that they feel like something that doesn’t affect them, that they are not criminals at all, that they would be the first person to run into Sandy Hook elementary school, for instance, to try to stop a criminal who is attacking folks. Do you see that sometimes they might feel threatened when they feel like the laws that are being proposed go just a little too far? And, we can argue about what’s --

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Too far and what’s not, but --

MELISSA KANE: I suppose -- I suppose if someone thought that the law was going too far and directly targeting them, but I have to say the laws we are talking about today, the bills we are talking about today, and I mentioned this when I spoke, my intent and the intent of these laws is to make sure that illegal guns are not in the hands of people who are not licensed and shouldn’t be licensed who are dangerous potentially to own them. This is not about people who are legally allowed to own guns under the guns laws of our state -- what is and isn’t allowed, and it should -- they shouldn’t be at all disturbing to responsible gun owners. So many of the gun owners that I know want these laws passed. They want to have safe storage, and we talked about this before. They -- I mean who doesn’t want to do whatever they can to make it more difficult for people, including children, who
shouldn’t be handling weapons to be handling weapons that aren’t theirs?

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I don’t think you’re gonna get much of a disagreement from anyone about that we all want the world to be safer, and we all want to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): The question is how effective are the laws that we have passed and the legislation that is before us at keeping the guns out of the hands of criminals, so the first thing I would ask is are you aware of how many firearms there are in the state?

MELISSA KANE: I don’t have that number offhand.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. I don’t think anybody has that number.

MELISSA KANE: Yeah.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, part of the reason why we don’t have that number is because very, very few of them are registered. Are you aware that there’s almost no requirements to register firearms in Connecticut or anywhere else?

MELISSA KANE: I don’t think that makes me feel any better. It makes me think that these laws are -- you know, even more reason to have these laws.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Okay. And, again, I promise to get to that. I really don’t want to take a lot of the committee’s time, but.

MELISSA KANE: Okay.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): So, the only guns that are required to be registered in Connecticut are things that are -- have been determined to fit into a category called assault weapons. The rest of the firearms are not registered.

MELISSA KANE: No, but the legal ones have serial numbers and the people who legally own them are licensed to own them.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. Well for many, many years, it was perfectly lawful to own a firearm in Connecticut. I believe it still is to own a firearm with or without a serial number without having a permit, and -- and it still is. The laws have changed recently to say that you can -- you have to have a permit to be able to purchase a firearm or you need a long gun certificate.

MELISSA KANE: Correct.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Do you believe there is something inherently more dangerous about a gun that does not have a serial number versus one that does?

MELISSA KANE: The gun itself is not more dangerous than any other gun, but the danger of that gun being in the hands of someone who wants to do something bad with it; yeah, it’s a little more dangerous. I think it’s more dangerous. I think an untraceable weapon where you don’t know where that person has gotten it, and it could have come from someone nefarious -- absolutely.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. Well, we -- we’ve heard some folks in law enforcement earlier today, and I asked them about the crimes that they see.

MELISSA KANE: Yeah.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, they made it very clear that they virtually never see a law-abiding person who has a pistol permit who lawfully owns their firearm as the perpetrator of a crime.

MELISSA KANE: Right.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): It’s almost always every time going to be a criminal or a gang member or somehow with a stolen firearm, so I guess thinking about that -- does it make any difference whether someone purchases a constructed illegal firearm versus someone stealing one from somebody who’s looking for money for drugs?

MELISSA KANE: Well, I’m not sure it makes a difference where they buy it, but if we are able to close up one of the opportunities for them to buy these guns, I think that makes a big difference.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right.

MELISSA KANE: Right.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Well, and the thing is that we already have laws that prevent people from transferring firearms to people that are criminals and without the proper credentials.

MELISSA KANE: And, yet, they’re still coming into the state.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Well, I’m not disagreeing --

MELISSA KANE: Yeah.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): With anything that you’ve said so far. I just want to point out something that I don’t think people really realize, which is that these -- and I do want to discuss the points
made by Representative O’Neill earlier also that people that purchase gun kits, which we were talking earlier as if it was a different thing, but an 80 percent lower receiver. Those are really the same thing. That is for someone who wants to take on the task of producing a firearm not entirely from scratch but more or less, and I would just argue that I think very, very few of these end up in the hands of criminals. Most of them are produced by people interested in a hobby for their own purposes and because they are actively involved in the competitive shooting sports, and they want to craft their own item or they even want to do something like put their family name on the -- on the gun in the process of producing it. That kind of thing.

MELISSA KANE: Sure.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, it would already be illegal for them to transfer that gun to someone who is ineligible to purchase it, so we already have that protection. I guess the question comes down to do we want to loop in that person with some criminals who might be in the process of producing a firearm without a serial number for the sake of committing a crime?

MELISSA KANE: I understand where you’re going with this, and no, obviously, if someone lawfully wants to and is able to and has the background check and the permitting necessary to do this, no of course not.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right.

MELISSA KANE: But any individual who is interested in circumventing our laws, any individual whether they have a criminal background or not.
SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right, and I think this is what Representative Dubitsky was getting at is that I don’t think you can determine the intent of someone -- what they are going to do if they are sitting there looking at a block of aluminum, and that’s a very difficult thing to ascertain, and I agree with you that anyone that is attempting to circumvent our laws by selling a firearm, serialized or otherwise to someone who was going to use it in a crime should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. We all agree on that. The question is I think that you’d be surprised to find out how few crimes are committed with guns without serial numbers or that were handmade with care by some enthusiast unless they were stolen to begin with, but --

MELISSA KANE: Okay.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Would you acknowledge does it make any difference really whether that gun had a serial number or not when it was stolen from that person to be used in a crime?

MELISSA KANE: I think if a gun is untraceable it makes solving that crime and dealing with it more difficult.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Do you realize that a criminal stealing a firearm could easily remove the serial number if he chose too; therefore, making it untraceable anyway? I guess the question is this -- so -- so you -- you said yourself that it’s a big process, and you recognize that to go through and purchase an 80 percent receiver and have the skills necessary to machine it and produce a firearm out of it. Do you think that that is more likely the way a criminal who is going to rob a store or commit a murder is likely to obtain a firearm or purchasing
one illegally off the street from some other criminal?

MELISSA KANE: Could you -- sorry. Would you repeat that? I didn’t --

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I wish I had some statistics, and I’m quite certain that if you contact our chief of police and you ask him this question -- how many guns used in crimes were a result of being stolen or from -- and have serial numbers versus the number of guns that were created by someone as a craftsman to produce their firearm and then stolen?

MELISSA KANE: Okay.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): So, and this goes back to the idea of purchasing for intent, so I think what Representative O’Neill was trying to get at is laws that are written in order for them to be constitutional they cannot be vague. They have to be very specific because you can’t prosecute people and send people to prison unless you have a really good idea of what the crime is that they committed, and a chunk of metal is a very difficult thing to determine when and it is or is not a gun. So, I guess if I was really trying to get you to -- to stand by this testimony, which you say should be the law, I would challenge you, and I would say, so madam selectwoman, when is a gun a gun?

MELISSA KANE: I guess when you call it a lower receiver blank. If that’s the same thing as a block of aluminum. I guess that’s when it’s a gun.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, I guess Representative Dubitsky kind of asked you a similar question, but
what if I didn’t call it that? What if I called it Fred?

MELISSA KANE: I don’t know.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right, and so that makes it vague, and I want you to understand that the reason why we’re asking these questions up here is not to put holes in your case or desire to have more criminals with guns.

MELISSA KANE: I appreciate that.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): We already ascertained nobody wants criminals with guns. What we’re trying to do is protect people that are decent law-abiding people who would help stop crime and do, and also to make sure that the law is really clear so we don’t loop in people that we shouldn’t, and we stick to the criminals. And, that’s a very hard thing to do because once we start saying that this is an 80 percent lower receiver, which I think someone pointed out, is only a marketing term because it really might only be 78 percent of the object.

MELISSA KANE: Right.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, a lower receiver is just really a block of metal by itself so you folks know. There’s many, many parts to making a gun. The thing about that is that the federal government wants to keep track of the ones that are produced, and we use serial numbers for really good reasons in crime, and -- and you’ve already hit on that, which is good. I mentioned that guns are not registered, but we have a procedure in place where if a gun is involved in a crime, the serial number is recorded, and then they can go back to search gun stores to find out where it was found, and that’s called a
bound book, but that’s not the same thing as keeping track of every gun produced by everyone.

MELISSA KANE: No.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): What I was getting at with the whole definition of a gun thing is that if we say that if this particular item is a gun because it is in our opinion 80 percent part of a gun, how do we identify what really is a firearm or not until it actually becomes a firearm? And, further, does it matter if what we’re really trying to get at is the transaction of that firearm?

MELISSA KANE: I think maybe we’re both saying the same thing then. [Chuckle].

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. So, I guess -- I guess the question is this. All right in one scenario I’m a good guy. I like to target shoot, so I purchase a kit or an 80 percent lower. I build my gun, and I go to the range and I shoot competitively with it, and I never bother anyone. Scenario two, I am a bad guy, and I am trying to produce a gun without buying one on the street, which would be a lot easier in my opinion, but I’m going to go through this extreme expense and process of having to have all this machining knowledge and everything else to finish this gun, which is the stretch that’s involved in this bill.

MELISSA KANE: But especially if it’s the type of weapon that’s prohibited in Connecticut.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Okay, but I’m gonna go through that entire process to make that happen, and then I’m either going to use it and commit a crime myself, which is already against the law, or I’m going to transfer it to someone else who’s going to
commit a crime with it. Both are things, which are already against the law. How did we actually passing this bill do anything but potentially harm people that were never going to cause a problem?

MELISSA KANE: I don’t see it that way.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Okay. Who exactly are we getting at with this legislation?

MELISSA KANE: People who are trying to circumvent our laws, a loophole of being able to own a gun without a permit, without the proper licensing.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): But again, we’ve already established that you can own a gun without a permit.

MELISSA KANE: Going forward. [Chuckle].

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): But I mean so we’re going to require every person who owns a gun in the state to come forward to say they have a gun?

MELISSA KANE: I didn’t say that.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Okay, but that would -- that’s --

MELISSA KANE: I’m talking -- you asked me what this bill does?

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Right. I understand.

MELISSA KANE: Yes.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): So, you want anyone who would manufacture a firearm for their own purposes to have to have a permit?

MELISSA KANE: Yes.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Would that be a more sensible bill to say that you cannot purchase a kit
and produce a firearm -- a ghost gun for lack of a better term -- unless you already have a pistol permit?

MELISSA KANE: I believe this effectively does the same thing. It’s keeping illegal guns out of the hands of people who don’t have a permit.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): No. This bill says that someone that has a pistol permit already --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Guys, guys.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I’m sorry. But to answer your question.

MELISSA KANE: Yes.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): This bill says that anyone even someone who’s never committed a crime who is an Olympic shooter for instance cannot purchase and build their own firearm. That’s what this bill says, and that’s the concern. That’s why people are upset. They are saying, why are you going after us when you’re simply trying to get a criminal? So, why don’t we say that -- I’m just throwing this out here.

MELISSA KANE: Yes. I understand.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Maybe the other people on the committee might say, you know what that makes a lot more sense if we’re really trying to make good sensible public policy without causing a lot of problems. Just one other concern that I just want to bring up to you is Representative Dubitsky brought up a scenario where a law enforcement officer comes in and the two of them, him and his friend, are talking about exchanging this block of aluminum, and Doug’s intent would be to turn it into
a firearm, and to his friend, it’s a paperweight. So, if the officer comes in and witnesses this, under this law, if it became a law, the question I have is what does the cop do? I mean who does he prosecute, if anyone, and based on what?

MELISSA KANE: I don’t know.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Can he -- can he know the intent of either party, and is that even worth prosecuting them for?

MELISSA KANE: What’s that? No. I -- I believe I’ve already answered that. I believe if you are able to trace the purchase of this, as you call it a lower receiver blank or piece of aluminum back to a place or a market where you can have instruction and the intent to create a firearm, that’s where the blame should lie with this.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Okay. Well, I really thank you guys for coming forward. I think that this was a good conversation.

MELISSA KANE: Yes. Thank you.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I think we found a lot of middle ground.

MELISSA KANE: I appreciate that.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And, I’m hoping that, you know the members of the -- of the committee can work together to recognize that we’re trying to get at a certain thing, which is to keep criminals from having guns --

MELISSA KANE: Absolutely.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Traceable, serialized, or otherwise.
MELISSA KANE: Right.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): And --

MELISSA KANE: I agree.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much.

MELISSA KANE: Thank you.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I appreciate you being here, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you both for being with us.

MELISSA KANE: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next, we’re gonna call up Sofia Munoz? Is Sofia still with us?

SOFIA MUNOZ: Okay. I’ve never done this before. I’m a little nervous, but I’m --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Just take your time.

SOFIA MUNOZ: Yeah. Okay. Chairs and distinguished members of the committee, Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, ranking members Kissel and Rebimbas, and distinguished members of the joint committee on the Judiciary, my name is Sofia Munoz. I am 14 years old, and I live in Greenwich, Connecticut. I am here on behalf of Connecticut Citizen’s Against Gun Violence, and on my own as well. When I found out about this hearing, I knew immediately that I wanted to testify in support of HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. I drove the way up here today with my father because as a 14-year-old student living in one of the wealthiest countries, a country
unlike so many others that are at war, the United States is at peace. No one, especially not children and adolescents should have to worry about being killed by gun violence or in a gun accident. Picture this -- two parents excited to have a night out to celebrate their wedding anniversary. They leave both their boys alone in the house, and unbeknownst to them, they were playing a game of army with their father’s shotgun when the younger son fatally shoots the older brother. That incident actually happened in a home across the street where I go to school.

A six-year-old girl, called Kayla Rolland, lived in Mount Morristown, Michigan. On the fateful morning of February 29, 2000, she was shot to death by a male classmate who obtained his weapon from his household. He had found the handgun under a pile of sheets and decided to bring it to school. He simply shot Kayla because he didn’t like her. These incidents play out far too often, and there’s a risk that they will become normalized, and people will become numb to these tragedies. Although, thank goodness, I have not lost a sibling or a loved one to gun violence, I shouldn’t have to be touched personally to feel like this is an important issue.

While I live in Connecticut right now, I have lived all around the world including even the United Kingdom and Canada. My friends that live there are not fearful of being shot at school by someone who has had access to an unsecured firearm in their home. I feel that it’s imperative to support this legislation, HB7218, AN ACT CONCERNING FIREARMS IN THE HOME. We don’t need another child or parent standing here several years from now testifying again after a loved one has been lost in another
tragic gun accident. I really think the time is now to ensure that firearms are secured. It’s simply common sense. Let’s not wait for another person to be injured or killed. This is a problem that can be easily solved. Please, I urge you to pass HB 7218 to protect the children and citizens of Connecticut.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Good job, Sofia. Like an old pro. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks so much for being with us today. Next up will be Jaye Clarke. When you’re ready, ma’am.

JAYE CLARKE: Distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. Good afternoon, and thank you for giving me this opportunity to testify. I am in opposition to SB 60. I am in opposition to raised HB 7223, and in opposition to -- and to support -- excuse me -- support of HB 5227. I’m going -- because of time constraints, I’m going to address one that I am passionate about. The raised HB 7218, to require the safe storage of all firearms whether loaded or unloaded in a home with a minor under 18 years of age. Firearms in the home are all about knowledge, education, and patience with children. I grew up with firearms in my parents’, grandparents’, and great-grandparents’ homes. My father was a military hero. He was in the Navy, and he did two tours in the Army. I met him when I was two-and-a-half years old. Some people have said that children cannot learn from the time that they’re very little. I did -- my mother, my father, my grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents taught me about firearms. I knew from the time I was a little bit of a kid, so kids can be taught, you just need the patience and the love, and you need to be able to teach them with the way that they learn. I am a holistic practitioner. I have been for 23 years.
people learn either visually or auditorily or perceptively, and you have to know which way they learn. We were taught from the time we could understand there was no curiosity seeking going on. Firearms are in the home for one reason, and that’s to protect the occupants of the home from those who believe that they are above the law. I had my home broken into in the daytime while I was there. He called on the phone, he told me he’d be there in five minutes with a skeleton key. I am a victim of violence, so I’m coming to you from a different perspective than some people. His intention was to rape me and hurt the dog, and he said so. I called the resident state trooper who said he was three towns over and couldn’t get there in time. [Crying]. He had told me to do whatever I had to, to protect the house, the property, the dog, and me. With five minutes or less, if your firearm is locked up, how do you protect yourself against someone who has physically hurt you more than once, twice, or three times. [Bell]. A firearm isn’t meant to be locked up because when it’s needed at a moment’s notice, seconds count. I know. I’ve lived it. I’m still living it. I’ve been a victim of violence.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

JAYE CLARKE: And, I’ll end there. If you have any questions?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Sure. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you, ma’am for being with us, and thank you for sharing your story with us. Appreciate it.

JAYE CLARKE: Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative Allie-Brennan, and Mark Barden.

REP. ALLIE-BRENNAN (2ND): Thank you for having us, and thanks for being here all day. It’s an honor to yield my time to Mark Barden, who is someone who’s been fighting to make sure that, you know, other parents don’t have to go through the horrors that he went through. This is not a fight that he chose. It’s a fight that he, unfortunately, had to go through, and he’s done a lot of great work, and I think lending a voice to him is crucial when we take out measures like this bill and the other bills in front of this committee, so without further ado, here’s Mark Barden.

MARK BARDEN: Thank you, Representative, and thank you, Chairman and members of the committee, and thanks for holding this public forum. I think this is a great -- this is important work, and I’m honored to be part of it. My name is Mark Barden, and I’m one of the founders and managing directors at Sandy Hook Promise. We are a national nonprofit based in Newton, and we’re committed to preventing gun violence before it happens at no cost with evidenced-based prevention programs in schools that train students and adults to know the signs of violence and intervene to prevent tragedies. To date, we have trained nearly six-million youth and adults and averted multiple school shootings, suicides, and other violent threats across all 50 states.

I’m also the father to three children -- James, Natalie, and Daniel. On the morning of December 14, 2012, my sweet little seven-year-old son, Daniel was shot to death in his 1st grade classroom at Sandy
Hook Elementary School. The pain of losing a child to any kind of violence is something that is indescribable. Unfortunately, Kristin and Michael Song know this pain all too well. In the time since they lost their son, Ethan, I have gotten to know the Songs and their family. I’m proud to be here in support of them today. They deserve the utmost accommodation for their bravery and persistence in working to see that other families are spared the loss of a loved one. As a result of their efforts, today, this committee is considering House Bill 7218, also known as Ethan’s Law, a bill that my organization and I are proud to support. We have good child access prevention bills here, laws here in Connecticut, but due to a loophole in the current law, such criminal liability can only be imposed if the gun is loaded, so Ethan’s Law would close this loophole by clarifying the current law also applies to unloaded guns. Ethan’s Law further extends these protections to all children by changing the definition of a minor from children age 16 and under to children age 18 and under. These are common-sense steps that should be taken immediately, so I’m proud to be here today in support of the Song family, and we stand with them in honoring Ethan’s memory by expressing our strong support for Ethan’s Law, Bill 7218. Please report this out of committee favorably. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Mr. Barden and Representative. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank -- thank -- oh, Vice Chairman Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just want to say I thank you for your testimony,
Mark. It’s great to see you here, and thank you for all of the work you’re doing all over the country —

MARK BARDEN: Thank you.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): To keep kids and everyone safe from gun violence, and Representative Allie-Brennan, you’re okay too. [Laughter]. Thank you.

REP. ALLIE-BRENNAN (2ND): Thank you, Representative. I appreciate that.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Glowing endorsement. Thank you very much both of you.

MARK BARDEN: Am I allowed to ask a question or are they only coming to me?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): It’s usually just coming that way, but we can -- we can chat offline.

MARK BARDEN: Okay. We can chat offline. All right. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thanks. Next up we have David Bicknell.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Your microphone -- you have to push the button.

DAVID BICKNELL: Bear with me. It’s been a long time since I’ve did this stuff. Good day. My name is David Bicknell. I’m here representing me. I’m opposed to some of these so-called bills that some of the Reps have brought forth. One, 7218. For the love of God, please take responsibility for your own actions, people. Okay. We don’t need the State of Connecticut telling us what we can do and what we cannot do in our own homes. You do enough of it already, okay. You know, I’ve been around firearms and ammunition my whole life, okay. I’m also one of
the best trap shooters in the world, okay. I have the titles and the trophies to prove it, all right, but as a kid, I was educated on firearms. My father taught me valuable lessons, so did my mother who actually hated guns, okay, though I was told by my father, okay, that if I touched a gun in our house while he was not there he would break my hands, okay. I listened. My hands ain’t broken are they, okay. Even my short little Italian mother would hit me with stuff, okay -- wooden spoons and stuff like that, okay. I’m not saying that we need to go back to those days, but we in the state of Connecticut should, if they want to be involved, what they should do is educate young people on what to do and the repercussions if they find a gun and if they play with it. I teach kids and adults how to shoot. I teach them state laws. I teach safety on the handling, cleaning, and the storage, okay. I also help people with self-responsibility, okay, as gun owners, but I don’t need the state of Connecticut in my living room telling me what I’m going to do in my own house. You know, are you guys paying my mortgage? No. I’m paying it, so I think I have the rights to say what I’m gonna do in my house, okay. So, if the state of Connecticut should get into the education part of it, well then practice what you preach ‘cause that’s what you’re telling us, right. Don’t dictate it. Don’t tell me what I’m going to do in my own home. Again, it’s called self and personal responsibility, and as far as your kids, your kids are your responsibility. Teach them. That’s it. I gotta go to work. Have a good day.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Next, we’ll hear from William Curlew.
WILLIAM CURLEW: Good morning or evening, maybe. No. Good afternoon. Good afternoon to the members of the committee. If it’s March, I must be testifying, so my name is William Curlew. I’m a resident of Windsor. I have submitted electronic testimony on all seven bills. I am just -- as a quick recap, I am for the regulation of firearms -- not able to regulate firearms in a municipality. I am for being able to carry a firearm, a permitted person carrying a firearm in a state park, and I am for the transfer of assault weapons and large capacity magazines until such times as a Supreme Court actually makes a correct ruling and voids that law entirely, so the other four bills I’m going to take them in order of the notes that I’ve made.

The first one, I’m going to talk about is concerning the presentation of a carry permit. Supreme Court ruled in Florida v. J.L. 529 u.s. 266 (2000) that there is no firearm exception to the 4th Amendment, an there are in my testimony that I’ve submitted electronically, there are 10 other sightings of that conclusion from various circuit courts, 2nd, 3rd, 10th circuit, and multiple state courts. It is unconstitutional to ask for the permit unless you have reasonable articulable suspicion. That is federal law. That has been upheld by the state court. If Connecticut decides to pass this law, the first person that gets arrested for refusing to do his permit has the opportunity to sue the state, and I just think that’s dumb, and I also believe that -- that profiling is a real problem. I was appalled by the testimony of the Bridgeport Police Chief who talked about the climate and how that people with firearms were inherently dangerous. I found that incredibly offensive as a -- as a firearms owner for
the better part of 50 years, so that’s the -- that’s my thing.

On SB 60, storage of a firearm in a motor vehicle. A locked car if it’s locked is a secure location, and it’s actually a lot harder to get into than a lot of these gun safes. Not impossible obviously, but my issue here is this law, as well as some parts of the safe storage law what we have done is we’ve said we’ve been unable to deter criminals from stealing firearms, and the reason we’re unable to deter them is right in your cast statistics from the -- the legislative research office that shows that about 60 percent of the time we -- actually for gun theft, it’s 72 percent -- 72 percent of the time, the charge of gun theft gets nollied, which means a criminal one in four chance of being prosecuted. Now, you put that -- you say, well, we can’t deter the criminal, let’s put the deterrence on the legal gun owner by making him deterrent.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Mr. Curlew, if you could summarize.

WILLIAM CURLEW: I’m pretty much done. Ghost guns, man, I thought we talked about that for like 40 minutes last year, so you know.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): [Laughing]. Yes. Are there questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for coming in. You were holding up and referencing some type of legislative research document. What is that?

WILLIAM CURLEW: This is the research document. Actually, it was cited earlier today. Case
statistics for firearms related offenses. It was produced by Michelle Kirby the Senior Legislative Attorney, January 23, 2018. The Office of Legislative Research docket No. is 2018-R-0018.
This is a -- a compendium of statistics about firearms related defensive for the fiscal years 2013 to 2017, so it’s a five-year spread. Obviously, 2018, they -- they haven’t done.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. With regard -- is there anything in that research that you interpret to affect in any way the bill regarding allowing people who have already registered certain firearms to transfer them amongst themselves?

WILLIAM CURLEW: I will say that illegally -- for instances, there’s an illegally transferring of pistol or revolver Connecticut statutes 29-33, 66.6 percent of the time across that five years those charges dropped. They’re nollied, so even if we -- even if we had laws about that, we’re not enforcing them, so we’re not getting the deterrent effect we need because we don’t enforce the laws we already have. Criminals know that a real criminal will just make a deal -- well, drop that, drop that, drop that because a lot of these charges carried mandatory minimums, and that’s why they got dropped, and so it really seems like what’s been happening is there’s been a sea change where we try to put legislation together to deter criminals from doing criminal acts for the fear of punishment. That didn’t work, so now we try to stop them by putting the onus on the legal gun owner who we think we have more control over and who is, you know, more afraid of running a foul because he wants to be a legal citizen. He wants to do the right thing, so it’s -- it’s -- the tenor of these laws is really starting to get to us
legal gun owners because we can see that what’s been happening is well we can’t stop guys from stealing your guns, so you stop guys from stealing your guns, and it just doesn’t make a lot of sense.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): All right. Well, one of the things that I get a lot is people come to me and say we need to increase the penalty for whatever crime, for x, for this violation we need to increase the penalty, and I always ask them well do you know whether or not the law is being enforced at the current penalty? Because if it’s not, you would think that the -- it’s an enforcement problem, not a penalty problem. Would you think that it would -- that we would have a better outcome for the people of this state if we enforced the current law?

WILLIAM CURLEW: Absolutely. The object of the game is you don’t get deterrent if there’s no consequence. There has to -- the whole theory of deterrence is that the consequence is there at the end of the crime. If -- if you got a -- a one in three chance or a one in four chance of actually even having the charge stick and you’re a criminal, they are great odds. I mean you can take that to the casino any day, and there just not gonna -- there just not gonna pay attention. They’re just gonna keep doing stuff.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there others? Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, sir, for your testimony, and thank you for bringing that OLR report up and giving us the
number. I did have a chance to -- to reference that, and was it 11 pages?

WILLIAM CURLEW: Yeah. Yeah. I’m looking at page three where it indicates the amount of people who have been arrested for carrying a pistol or revolver without a permit, which is part of what we’ve been discussing here today, and I don’t know -- you can correct me if I’m wrong. I’m reading the -- it was 500 arrests in 2017 for that, and more of half of them were nollied to 252 cases, and 32 of them were dismissed. Is that what you’re seeing also?

WILLIAM CURLEW: Yeah. It’s pretty scary. I ended up bringing that into a spreadsheet and doing the averages across the entire period, so you don’t have that benefit, but yeah, if you can -- if you can do the head math real fast, yeah, it’s really -- it’s pretty scary. It’s 50.02 percent across from 20 -- and they have stats from 2013, all the way to 2017. It is one of the top three or four offenses actually if you go by the number of occurrences. Those 600 numbers, those are big numbers --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah, and --

WILLIAM CURLEW: And, it’s up over 600 every single year.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, I also wanted to ask you on page 6 there is illegal possession of a large capacity magazine. I don’t know, maybe I’m reading this wrong, but this indicates that in 2017 there were 105 arrests, and 86 of those were nollied. Seven of those were dismissed, so that’s -- that’s close to 90 percent.

WILLIAM CURLEW: Yeah, not a -- not a great deterrent.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah, and similarly with 2016 with the same -- the same line -- 111 arrests, 97 nollies, 6 dismissed, so once again, a little over 90 percent of these cases where people were arrested, they’re not even prosecuted. Do you happen to know the affect -- the collateral affect is on these arrests that are not being prosecuted with regard to pistol permits?

WILLIAM CURLEW: I have no idea.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so if I was to tell you that people’s pistol permits are taken away and they don’t get them back for a very long time, although their case was dismissed, that would be news to you?

WILLIAM CURLEW: Yeah. If the case -- well, if the case is dismissed, then they get their permit back, right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well --

WILLIAM CURLEW: They can go to the board like they -- [Crosstalk].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): They’d have to have a hearing --

WILLIAM CURLEW: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Before the board.

WILLIAM CURLEW: Yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, it takes about two-and-a-half years to get a hearing before the board.

WILLIAM CURLEW: Yeah, yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, if I go to court two weeks after I get arrested, and my case is
dismissed, I can’t get a hearing before the board for about two-and-a-half years.

WILLIAM CURLEW: That is correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah, so, okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there other questions or comments? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

WILLIAM CURLEW: Thank you, folks.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Next one, Richard Souza.

RICHARD SOUZA: Good afternoon.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Mr. Souza, you have to turn your microphone on.

RICHARD SOUZA: Oh, that would be helpful, wouldn’t it? Can you hear me now?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Yes. [Laughing].

RICHARD SOUZA: Good afternoon, distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I’m Richard Souza. I live in East Hartford. I’m a scientist and engineer by profession and an amateur gunsmith. I oppose raised Bill No. 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS. Americans have been making firearms at home for their personal use since before the birth of the Republic, but now, suddenly it’s a problem. And, by the way, they’re just homemade firearms, not scary ghost guns, vampire guns, or even zombie guns, and despite the propaganda being tossed around, machining a working firearm is a little more complicated than assembling Legos. This bill wants hobby gunsmiths to adhere to federal law for federally licensed manufacturers of firearms to
force us to add state-issued serial numbers to homemade firearms under pane of a Class C felony -- a felony -- a prison term tomorrow for doing what was always legal yesterday. From the ATFs own website, firearms may be lawfully made by persons who do not hold them -- a manufacturer’s license under the gone control act 1968, provided they are not for sale or distribution and the maker is not prohibited from receiving or possessing firearms. Furthermore, markings are not required on firearms manufactured for personal use. Serial numbers are not required. This bill -- this minority report nightmare is based on the presumption that only a criminal would make firearms at home; and yet, do you really expect a convicted felon to spend thousands on education, milling machines, and other tools to make a firearm, and then to attach a serial number to his homemade firearm and register it with the state so that the police can show up and arrest him. Criminals don’t make firearms. They steal them.

Indeed, the Hartford Police have run sting operations to catch criminals in the act of stealing firearms from their own police crews. As only the law-abiding will follow this law, and they aren’t the problem, what’s the point of this bill? It’s already a felony for a person to manufacture a firearm for someone else or to transfer a firearm to a felon. Because criminals use firearms to commit crimes, a way to tell the innocent that their rights and liberties depend not on their own conduct but on the conduct of the guilty and the lawless by criminalizing an act that is not wrong in itself. The milling of an unregistered firearm that does no harm to anyone. This bill violates the presumption
of innocence, the principle that ensures that
government honors the liberty of its citizens until
their deeds convict them. This law effectively
[Bell] presumes that all who would machine a firearm
at home are no better than murders, robbers, and
rapists, and that reveals the ugly truth of this
bill. There are some who no longer believe that
their neighbors act out of a noble desire to defend
themselves, their families, and their communities
from violent crime or civil disorder. They do not
trust gun-owning Americans to be dedicated to the
common good, and what a sad day for our state that
is.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you, Mr. Souza.

RICHARD SOUZA: That’s all I have to say. But I
have more in my written testimony concerning the --
the problems with trying to manufacture a firearm at
home for your personal use and trying to evade this
law at the same time. It’s almost impossible.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there
questions or comments? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Thanks for coming in. Tell me what -- what kind of
firearms do you make at home?

RICHARD SOUZA: Do I make?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah.

RICHARD SOUZA: I make what is illegal in
Connecticut, and since 2013, that’s not a hell of a
lot.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Tell me what it is.
What is it? Like what kind of gun do you make?
RICHARD SOUZA: I can make a representative of a 10/22 Ruger Rifle.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

RICHARD SOUZA: I can make 1911 pistols.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. What are you making them out of?

RICHARD SOUZA: [Chuckle] I make them out of metal. [Laughing].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so you start with a block of aluminum or a block of steel?

RICHARD SOUZA: I start with a -- for a -- for a Ruger Rifle, I start with a block of metal.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, at what like -- you got this block of metal that I assume you -- you cut off a bigger stock to -- you sort of cut it to the right size initially?

RICHARD SOUZA: Yeah. You have to start out -- you buy a billet from a machine house, you know, and then you have to cut it down, and ream it out, and to get it to the -- to the proper size. I mean I’m an amateur. I’m not a professional at doing this kind of work, and --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I understand, but I’m just trying to find out what the process is. We heard testimony earlier about when a hunk of metal becomes a firearm and when it therefore should have a serial number, so I’m just trying to get a little information from you as to how that process works ‘cause as you saw with one of the other witnesses taken to its logical conclusion, this bill under certain circumstances resulted in complete
ridiculousness, so I just want to get from you because you are somebody who knows how the process works -- some information on -- on how -- how if this -- if this bill were law, how it would be possible to comply with it? Is that okay I ask you a couple questions about that?

RICHARD SOUZA: I don’t know how I would comply with it. [Laughing]. I don’t know how I would comply with it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, let me ask you -- let me ask you this. This bill defines the word firearm to include an unfinished frame or lower receiver.

RICHARD SOUZA: That’s right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And -- and at what point in your processing would you be in possession of an unfinished frame or lower receiver?

RICHARD SOUZA: I mean an unfinished -- the bill says -- it talks about receive of blanks, and I mean we say an unfinished. They’re all unfinished.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, when you cut -- when you initially cut that block off the initial stock, you’ve got an unfinished frame or a lower receiver in your hand?

RICHARD SOUZA: That’s right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, and at that point under this bill, that block of metal would be considered a firearm?

RICHARD SOUZA: That’s right. It would, but I have to adhere -- I have to put a -- I have to put a serial number on this bill that says before
completion of the firearm, and the firearm depending on whether it’s a rifle or a pistol or whatever is either the frame in the case of a pistol or a receiver in the case of a rifle like that 10/22 that I talked about. Now, if I -- if I get a block of metal, and you say it’s a firearm and I have to put a serial number on it, then at some point I might cut the serial number off, you know, and then I have taken what you have said is a firearm and I have cut a serial number off it, which we can forget about the state of Connecticut, okay. That’s a federal felony. That’s a big deal, okay. That’s ten years in prison, okay, and so I mean these laws when you talk about making something that people have been doing pretty much forever and making it a felony and a Class C felony -- I’m not a lawyer, but a Class C felony is pretty serious as I understand it. I mean who goes to prison for a Class C felony? That’s like a pedophile; right?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, let me ask you this. Under lines 127 through 135, it starts off no individual shall complete the manufacture or assembly of a firearm without first obtaining a serial number, so it says shall not complete the manufacture. That means essentially turn it into a firearm.

RICHARD SOUZA: But when is it completed?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But -- but let me -- let me ask you this. If you’ve already got a firearm, which is a square block of aluminum, have you not already completed the manufacture?

RICHARD SOUZA: No. I have a square block of metal. The manufacture hasn’t even started.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Right, but under this bill, it would already be a firearm.

RICHARD SOUZA:  It would.  It would.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  So, that doesn’t make sense, does it?

RICHARD SOUZA:  No. It would be like if I went down the street to a metal fabrication shop, and I asked them, do you have any castings around or any billets? Do you have any scraps that I can play with? And, they give me a scrap, they give me a block of metal, and from what I hear today if my intent is to make that into a firearm, that’s a firearm already. As soon as I left that shop, that’s a firearm, and the only thing I need to do is put a serial number on it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Right, so it says you can’t complete the manufacture of a firearm without a serial number, but you’ve already got a firearm as a block of metal.

RICHARD SOUZA:  That’s right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Okay, so that seems to be an absurd result of this bill doesn’t it?

RICHARD SOUZA:  I would think so, but.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Okay. Let me ask you are you involved at all with dealing with polymers?

RICHARD SOUZA:  Like what?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Polymer grips and things like that. Polymer frames.

RICHARD SOUZA:  No.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. ‘Cause I was going to ask you about one other portion of the bill, which deal with polymer frames, but if you’re not familiar with that, I’ll -- I’ll see if there’s --

RICHARD SOUZA: Well, I’ve done molding and extraction as an engineer with polymers, I mean.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, let me ask you. Maybe you’ll know. Under lines 136 through 141, the bill would prohibit the manufacture of a -- a firearm from polymer plastic and firearm being a grip or a frame presumably unless such plastic is imbedded with at least 3.7 ounces of material type 17-4 PH stainless steel. Do you have any idea what that means or why?

RICHARD SOUZA: I’m assuming that’s where they want you to engrave a serial number, but it doesn’t say that here. It says such firearm is engraved. It doesn’t say where to put the mark.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Why 3.7 ounces of type 17-4 PH stainless steel?

RICHARD SOUZA: I don’t know. Why not 3.9 or 3.2 or 3.3? I mean I don’t know.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, you don’t know where that comes from?

RICHARD SOUZA: I have no idea where that number comes from.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): All right. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there other questions or comments? I’m seeing none.
Thank you very much for your testimony. We’ll hear next from Marcus Wilson.

MARCUS WILSON: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Before I begin, I just want to take a moment and thank the Judiciary Committee for giving me the opportunity to speak. My name is Marcus Wilson, and I currently reside here in Hartford, Connecticut. I’m originally from Bridgeport, Connecticut, and I’m here to speak in favor of two safe storage bills, HB 7218 and HB 7223. I feel these two pieces of legislation are important because they reduce suicide rates, accidental deaths, injuries, as well as urban gun violence. Specifically related to urban gun violence, I lived in the city center my whole life. I participated in and also have been a victim of crime with a deadly weapon. Nevertheless, I’m currently a school major in social work and in less than a year will have earned the ability to have my criminal record expunged.

I can speak firsthand about gun violence and how weapons are sometimes acquired, and yes, it is sometimes true that weapons are sometimes stolen from cars and homes if not secured. Safe storage safes can act as a deterrent for those seeking to steal a weapon. When homes and cars are broken into, people must react quickly. A safe could appear too time consuming to even deal with. Safe storage laws will surely have an impact in decreasing urban gun violence, and so I ask the Judiciary Committee to vote in favor of these sensible laws because they too can save the lives of many, and thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak this afternoon.
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for coming and sharing your testimony today.

MARCUS WILSON: No problem.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, you are speaking about -- about --

MARCUS WILSON: The two safe storage bills.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Yeah, and the safe acting as a deterrent, especially in a vehicle. So, a lot of people today have come up and said that safes won’t act as a deterrent, but you are someone who’s been -- who’s witnessed and been subject to similar crime like that, and you say that they are a deterrent; right?

MARCUS WILSON: Absolutely.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. That’s all I want. And, if you want to expand on that, you’re welcome to.

MARCUS WILSON: Yeah, actually, by hearing everybody’s testimony, I’m learning every situation is unique in itself, but specifically related to what I’m talking about as far as crime and where I’m from, Bridgeport, that definitely will act as a deterrent. ‘Cause like I said, whenever you -- whenever someone’s in the act of trying to do it, a safe could appear too time consuming, which could make them hesitate or even, you know, change their decision in trying to steal that weapon or obtain it.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you very much. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there others? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

MARCUS WILSON: No problem. Thank you for having me.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We’ll hear next from Senator Martin Looney. Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Good afternoon, and happy birthday, Mr. Chairman. It’s quite a way to spend your birthday.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): It is. I wouldn’t have it any other way.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): But it’s what we sign up for as a public servant. [Clearing throat]. Good afternoon, Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and members of the Judiciary Committee. I’m Martin Looney, State Senator of the 11th District representing parts of New Haven, Hamden, and North Haven. And, I’m here to express my support for Senate Bill No. 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT, House Bill 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS, House Bill 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME, and House Bill 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF A PISTOL OR REVOLVER IN A MOTOR VEHICLE.

So, first of all, I apologize for my -- for my voice. I’ve had a bad cold for about a week and have a sinus infection, so my -- my ears are clogged, so if there’s any -- any questions after my presentation people need to speak loudly ‘cause I
can’t hear very well today, but Senate Bill 60 would require individuals who are openly and visibly carrying a pistol or revolver to produce their permit upon request of the law enforcement officer. This would seem to be a common-sense requirement under Connecticut law in order to legally carry a pistol or revolver. A person must also be carrying the permit for that weapon. I know that there are some opponents of this legislation that are claiming that it is a kin to a stop and frisk law, while other opponents claim it allows for illegal search and seizure, but the bill before you does not allow an officer to stop and frisk a person who is legally carrying a weapon, nor does it allow seizure of such legally carried weapon either.

The 2nd Amendment of the United States Constitution states that a well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed, and this language has long been interpreted to allow certain common-sense regulations for gun rights, so these are the kinds of regulations to protect public health and safety that come under the police powers of a state. And, this bill is one of those regulations. So, for instance, there is no such thing as a completely unfettered constitutional right. It’s just as Oliver Wendell Holmes once said that the 1st Amendment does not grant people the right to yell fire in a crowded theater because obviously that right is conditioned upon the -- the risk of harm to others in that context, and it is -- it is also true that in many other ways you have the -- if someone said, well that is what I felt like saying -- I am a performance artist, and what I wanted to say was “fire.” That was my performance
in that public space, and that would be okay under certain circumstances, but not where it creates a risk of panic and people being trampled to death at the doors of the facility, so that’s a regulation also. Also, there are contacts where the courts have upheld [Bell] the limitations on certain religious expressions embodied in religious medallions and the like among those in corrections facilities because if it’s something that can be shaped into a or sharpened into a weapon, those kinds of religious medallions are not allowed.

So, this bill is one of those regulations because the requirement is somewhat parallel to the requirements that when driving an automobile a person must be carrying a driver’s license, that when a driver’s asked by an officer to present the license the driver must comply with a request that would seem reasonable. A person carrying a pistol or revolver should be subject of the same requirements. So, it would seem every more justifiable to require a presentation of a permit to carry since an openly visible pistol or revolver legal or not may cause anxiety to other persons within sight of that weapon. A visible weapon can be used as an intimidation factor even when the person carrying does possess a permit. It is uncommon that the sight of an automobile can cause undue anxiety in any person, and some have argued that well motor vehicles stops have to be conditioned upon some reasonable suspicion or probable cause, but that’s not always true. The courts have upheld checkpoint stops in certain circumstances. For instance a checkpoint for -- to check on DUI without individualized suspicion of drivers as long as every driver coming through that
checkpoint is stopped, it is seen as being a -- as not profiling and is not a -- a kind of stop set up to harass or identify or -- or profile certain people.

Another context where checkpoints have been set up in motor vehicle places where people are stopped without individualized suspicion is stops where an investigation is going on. There was a Supreme Court, a Supreme Court case a few years ago where there had been a fatal accident with a hit-and-run driver, and a week after that accident the court -- or the police set up a checkpoint near the location of that accident hoping that people coming by that site on the same time a week later on the same night at a different time might remember something they saw if it was part of their regular commute.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Senator Looney --

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): And, that was upheld also as a reasonable investigative approach.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Can I ask a question? Do you --

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): These are things where you have the -- the right to do this without having individualized suspicion so that -- and then House Bill 7219 would ban ghost guns, which do not have serial numbers of course, and are most commonly either sold or partially assembled and are not required by current law to have a serial number or created with a 3D printer. So these are -- a concern about these is that the -- the allegation made in opposition is sometimes that gun laws of this kind don’t necessarily affect the rate of gun-related crime, but statistics show that gun laws do
work. The rate of gun deaths in Connecticut is 5.1 deaths a year for every 100,000 people. That’s less than half the national average, which is 11.9. Our lower death rate correlates with our gun laws that are ranked the third strongest in the nation by the Gifford Law Center to prevent gun violence, which has been tracking gun deaths and ranking gun laws since 2010, so if we were to trade our guns laws for those in Mississippi for instance, which is ranked the lowest in the nation in terms of its gun laws, we could expect another 580 gun deaths a year in Connecticut, so our laws are having an effect. For every gun safety measure adopted that prevents unnecessary deaths, there are people who will try to circumvent the law, and in response to a ban on automatic rifles, people sought gun stocks, trigger cranks, and so on. People do seek -- in response to background checks, people seek gun shows in other states. Federal law requires manufacturers to affix serial numbers to firearms, which enables the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives to track the weapons through the entire retail system all the way to the consumer. Assembly and obtaining a ghost gun is just another circumvention of our laws, not only federal, but our state’s background check requirements. And, these have been effective. A study of our 1995 permitting law found that it was associated with a 40 percent reduction in Connecticut’s firearm homicide rate. We must not permit a person unable to obtain a pistol permit due to a failed background check to then evade the law and obtain a ghost gun that he can obtain by either building a 3D gun himself or obtaining one over the internet, so this is an issue where time matters, crimes have been committed in America with guns
illegally manufactured at home, and from parts purchased online, so we -- we do need to take action on that this year to prevent and anticipate future harm.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Senator -- Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I would like to express support for House Bill 7218, in terms of safe storage of firearms in the home, and 7223 concerning the storage of a pistol or revolver. These would improve public safety by requiring safe gun storage. The first would raise the age under the definition of a minor from 16 to 18 in regard to safe gun storage requirements. It would also require safe storage of firearms regardless of whether the weapon was loaded or unloaded, and 7223 would require any pistol or revolver left in an unattended motor vehicle be kept securely in a locked safe. These are -- these small changes could save lives. Obviously, we saw the tragedy in Guilford last year, which has led to some of this legislation. So, thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for taking on the support and any issues in this session. Thank you so much.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Questions or comments from members of the committee?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you, Senator Looney, for coming in.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Could you speak up a little, sir?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I apologize. I’ll try to get closer to the microphone. I want to talk to you about the -- the show-your-permit bill. I don’t
know if you’ve heard any of the testimony that’s gone on before, but several people testified, and -- and presented Supreme Court cases that indicated that this type of stop without reasonably articulable suspicion would violate the 4th Amendment, and it’s contrasted with -- with automobile stops in that automobile stops have to be every person as you said or have to be you know every other person or some system that they can’t individually point to one person and say, we’re gonna stop that guy even though we have no reasonably articulable suspicion, so how do we get over the 4th Amendment hurdle that was testified by several people including Supreme Court case law?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): First of all, I don’t believe it is a 4th Amendment problem, and I believe we could -- we could mandate that the police do in fact ask that question of every person they see in public with a visible gun just to verify that the gun is properly permitted to avoid selective enforcement profiling of that kind or -- or for harassment purposes, so I think if it were asked of everyone the officer encounters in that position just as it’s asked of everyone at a checkpoint, I think you would adequately address that issue.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But would you agree with me that if we -- if we didn’t do that, that it would be a 4th Amendment issue?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Potentially, but I still think it would be worth adopting. I expect if the law’s adopted it will be challenged at any case, but I -- I think it’s worth -- it’s worth adopting and then worth litigating, but I think by also adding to it a requirement that the -- that the police not
have discretion in this matter would go a long way toward enhancing the bill against any potential challenge.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, let’s -- let’s walk through that in a minute. Logically, that means that somebody walking down the street causing nobody any harm, not doing anything that’s suspicious of a crime, if they were just walking down the street, under your scenario, every single police officer that sees them during the day would be required to detain them and insist on seeing their permit.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): If the gun were visible, and you’re saying walking down the street. Obviously, if the gun is not -- is in somebody’s pocket or a shoulder holster or something like that, it may not be seen, but if the person is in fact showing that gun to everyone he encounters as he walks along the street, I would think that it would be reasonable to have that person show the permit when asked.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. You’ve -- you’ve heard incidences where there’s been a shooting, and a police officer has said, I thought I saw a gun; right?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so in an instance like this, even the -- the most highly trained officer may when responding to a call of a man with a gun think they see a gun; right? Even when there’s no gun.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I wouldn’t speculate on that. Officers are generally well trained to -- to be generally accurate. Obviously, there are
mistakes when it would occur, but -- but again, I think a gun is a unique kind of obstacle. It’s a uniquely lethal object, and that when it is brought out in public as it’s authorized to be only when properly permitted, I think it’s reasonable for the protection of everyone else that the officer make that inquiry.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. What about knives?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Knives I would not put in the same category.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Is it your understanding or are you aware that there are far more people killed and injured with knives every year in this country than with guns?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I don’t think that’s relevant to this discussion because someone -- someone who is a -- can -- can shoot someone at some distance without ever even approaching them. It’s -- it’s much more difficult to kill someone with a knife than it is with a gun.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But it happens quite a bit more often.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): It does happen more often, but I think -- but we don’t permit knives either.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But there are legal knives and there are illegal knives.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Right. In terms of length, in terms -- right, but we don’t have a -- we don’t have the -- the governmental regulation of a permitting process in the same way that we have for guns.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, you would make a distinction because of the permitting process?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): No. I said, I’m pointing that out as one example.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I’m not saying that’s an exclusive example limiting all other categories of potential examples.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, it’s your feeling that even though if we did not have a requirement that every police officer who sees anybody carrying a firearm would be required to go and stop and detain that person and assess whether they have a permit. It is --

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I don’t agree with your term seizure. I believe that it is an investigatory -- an investigatory stop.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, under Terry v. Ohio, a Terry stop?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Well, a Terry stop is more invasive. A Terry stop allows you to search the person completely. What we’re talking about in this case is just asking for a permit. It would not, in my view, authorize a Terry stop unless the person does not have a permit. You know, that’s a different story, but if the permit is present, that’s all the police officer would be entitled to see.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah, but it’s still detention though; right?
SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): It would be a stop. Not necessarily -- I wouldn’t define it as a seizure. The seizure is I think at a later stage of the encounter if it -- if it escalates.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Right, but it is a detention, but not before you leave.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): It’s a stop. It’s a stop.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Right, but they can’t just leave.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Not -- no. Not at that point. They are detained. So, as long as the person has the permit, it is something that would be -- I think as the Supreme Court has talked about in some cases has talked about inquiries -- conversations where the police may stop somebody on the street for an informational stop. In many cases, the courts have not recognized that as a -- as a stop because the person who is asked to you have a permit for that gun, takes it -- may I see it? Takes it out and quickly shows it to the police officer, and goes on his way.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But in those instances, the person is free to refuse to talk to the officer and is free to leave without saying anything.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): But in this case, he would be required to show the permit.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so it’s not the same scenario as you just explained.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Well, it would be -- it would be an informational stop as I said at the beginning.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Right.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): The information being the showing of the permit.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Thank you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Senator Champagne, followed by Representative Fishbein.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you, Senator Looney for showing up. I’m listening to this. I’m going back to my police days.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): If you could speak up -- [Crosstalk].

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): I said I’m listening to this and I’m going back to my police days.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Okay.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): And, what you’re saying is I’m driving my police car down the road, I see a guy walking down the road minding his business carrying some presents, and he’s got a gun on his side, but now I’m required to pull over, approach him, stop him, ask him for his -- his pistol permit, and then drive off. The next guy driving down the road has to do the exact same thing?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I’m saying if that provision were adopted. I’m not saying you should. In answer to the earlier Representatives question, I said that is the way that the committee could probably completely forestall a 4th Amendment challenge. I’m not saying this -- I don’t think that’s really
necessary to have that mandate on the police, but if the committee wanted to impose it as a way of -- of dealing with the issue of selective enforcement they could. I’d be willing to support the bill and introduce the bill without that requirement.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Well, so I’m going to back up a second. So, I see him, I pull over, I stop, I need to see your pistol permit, and the guys says, well, what for. Well, you’re carrying a gun. Okay, legal right. So, somebody before us just testified that, you know, he was eating lunch, the officers came in. The officers do what they normally do. I’m gonna take your permit. I’m gonna radio the permit number in. dispatch is gonna check the number. Dispatch is going to get back to me with it over the radio again, and if it’s valid, then I tell the gentleman, okay, you’re free to go. At what point do you see that as a detention? ‘Cause I stopped him, I’m requiring him to give me information; does he feel like he’s free to go? The answer is no because I have his permit in my hand. So, to me, that’s a seizure, and which is a violation of his rights.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I don’t see how it’s a violation of his rights if you have a situation where the officer is trying to determine something essential for the preservation of public safety under the -- under the safe police power.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): But there was no danger. He has a gun on his hip and he’s walking down the road.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I don’t think you can draw from that the conclusion that there is no -- no danger period. There may be no danger at that
particular moment, but I think it’s arguable that
the -- the carrying of a gun in public, although
legal, is a -- is a unique experience. It’s very
different than carrying a knife, a loaf of bread, a
hammer, a hatchet, whatever else you might be
carrying.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Well, I think I’m -- I’m
gonna differ a little bit, and -- and this part
about the knife -- are you aware of the 21-foot
rule?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Okay. A knife is just as
dangerous as a gun. In fact, if you got a knife and
you’re within 21 feet of me and you charge me,
you’re gonna get me unless I have some place to
hide, so they’re just as dangerous as knives, but
you know, beyond that, you said it’s worth
litigating. Does Connecticut have extra money to
litigate something all the way to the Supreme Court?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes. Connecticut, I think
has the right to and should litigate if it -- if any
law that it passes is challenged. It should be
willing to defend that law, litigate it whatever
extent possible, and we have a very well-staffed
Office of the State Attorney General that is
certainly, I think highly capable of defending state
statutes at any level of the court.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): ‘Cause I see this law
right form the very get go being in violation of a
person’s rights, and I see the officer stopping this
person, asking for that permit being a seizure
because he’s not free to go until I get the
information back, and -- and because of that, I -- I
truly don’t believe we should be wasting our money saying we’ll just litigate it or we have extra money to give to whoever the first person is to sue. You know, I guess we have different definition of this, but this -- this goes with a lot of experience. Thank you.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Thank you.

SENATOR CHAMPAGNE (35TH): Thank you for coming in.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Senator.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Nice to see you, Representative.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I’m just trying to in listening to your answers you think that the situation if somebody is walking down Chapel Street in New Haven with a gun in their holster should be handled differently than somebody walking down the street -- Chapel Street with a hatchet. It’s -- it’s a different situation?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Well, I would think that equal -- you wouldn’t ask somebody whether they had a permit for a hatchet because you know that they don’t.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure, but you’d stop and I’m sure you’d be making some sort of inquiry in both of those situations.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes. I would imagine so, but it would be in a different level, you know, because you wouldn’t be asking for a permit, right.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Although, perfectly legal to carry a hatchet down Chapel Street in New Haven.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Pardon me.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Perfectly legal to carry a hatchet -- a hatchet down Chapel Street in New Haven, so --

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): It is, yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah. You were going through a scenario where the police office has contact with the individual, gets the permit, has to call it in -- are you aware of what’s standard operating procedure for the New Havel Police Department is with regard to the firearm that’s on the individual’s person once that permit is being called in? Are you aware of what the standard operating procedure is?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I don’t know if they have adopted a procedure on this since we have up to this point not given them the permission to -- to make that inquiry.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, do you know if this law were to pass if it would be standard operating procedure for them to call in the pistol permit as well as to call in about the firearm itself?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I do not. I think that is something that the -- the committee could consider mandating as part of this statute or have the Department of Public Safety adopt regulations or leave it to individual departments to adopt their own protocols.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, certainly, I know with the New Haven Police Department on a traffic stop if they have knowledge that there’s a firearm in the vehicle perhaps closely related to the operator of the vehicle, for their own safety and the safety of the operator, they usually secure that firearm; correct?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, I would expect that if this law was to pass that would sort of be the same -- same sort of procedure -- we have somebody who’s openly carrying, and the law has authorized, although they aren’t suspected of committing a crime, the law is authorized to confirm their permit. The officer in the course of doing that would for their own safety and the safety of others take the firearm; right?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Potentially. I -- I don’t know in every case, but -- [Crosstalk].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, would you recommend?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): That’s certainly a possible scenario.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. I -- I frankly I wouldn’t see it any other way. I wouldn’t want an officer, you know, potentially in that situation, but I’ll take your answer. Under this language, if I’m printing -- do you know what printing is? In the context of carrying a gun, do you know what printing is?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Printing, no.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. It’s where your clothing is too tight that one can see like an
outline of the firearm or something. It isn’t normal that somebody has let’s say a bulge in the back of their clothing, right, so normally if it’s like under a t-shirt or something like that, it gives a reasonable thought that there’s a firearm there. Would an officer be able to ask for a permit if someone was printing, under this language?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I believe not because the gun itself would not be visible.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, the clause that we’re looking at in this language. It says provided such holder is carrying a pistol or revolver that is observed by such law enforcement officer, so printing potentially would be observed, a bulge would be observed --

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): No. I don’t -- I don’t think you can say that the same way because the bulge can be caused by any number of other things.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, that’s part of the point here, yes.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): And, that’s why I don’t think it would be covered by -- I think the gun would have to be clearly visible as a gun to trigger the requirements of this statute.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, you agree with me that this language as drafted does not say clearly visible? It just says carrying a pistol or revolver that is observed by such law enforcement officer. It doesn’t say could be visible outside or anything like that.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): I think it is -- I don’t think the word observed in itself would be adequate
to trigger this requirement either because you’re not observing the gun under the scenario you mentioned something under somebody’s clothes. You’re observing a bulge under the clothes that could be -- could be a gun, it could be something else, so I wouldn’t say you’re necessarily -- you don’t know what you’re observing at that point. You may suspect what you’re observing.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, that would be unreasonable in your mind for an officer to ask for a permit if they say that bulge in the back of somebody’s clothing.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes. I mean this committee could have that requirement if they chose to expand the scope of this, but that’s not what I recommended, no.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Thank you, Representative.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Stafstrom.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you, Senator Looney for being here and for your advocacy over several years now on SB 60, and its previous iterations. You know, we’ve heard this bill a couple times now and I’ve sat on this committee every time it’s been heard, and I’ve never heard anybody say that police officers should not be allowed to do their job. That a police officer should not be able to intervene in the interest of public safety and determine whether if somebody is carrying that firearm down Chapel Street or whether they’re lawfully carrying that firearm or not. We continue to hear sort of this continued argument
about -- about stop and frisk, and I’ve heard, you know, your opinion on it as an attorney and as Senate President. I heard the attorney general in the state of Connecticut speak on it earlier today that he believes it passes constitutional muster, but the objection continues to exist and continues to be out there, and so there’s been some other proposals on how to change this bill, on how to change the language, and one of them is sort of similar to a fishing permit, that if you’re openly carrying a firearm that you have to visibly display your permit like you do a fishing license when you go fishing. Would you support us changing this bill to put that language in if the objections continue to persist on this stop and frisk issue?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): You mean in the sense of wearing the permit visibly?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yeah.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Or having it on a halter or attached to a coat? Well, potentially, I think that’s something the committee could explore. The only problem is that you know obviously it does require the officer to stop the person to -- to verify that it is in fact a permit, so -- so it would still involve the interaction with the person, but it would, you know, it might facilitate the speeding up the encounter, but there’d --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Still have to be the stop to verify that it is a -- you know a gun permit rather than a fishing permit and rather than the ID that the person had at the corporate luncheon he was at before he came outside on the street.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, you don’t have to go digging through your wallet, and it could speed up the process and maybe alleviate some of the concern. It would speed up that stop and --

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): It would speed up the encounter, yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Senator, just one other bill that you didn’t have a chance to speak on that I wanted to ask you about that’s on our agenda if you had a chance to look at it, and that’s HB 5227, which would prohibit a municipality from exercising home rule to pass its own firearms ordinances. Do you have thoughts on that bill as well? I know you didn’t have a chance to discuss it in your opening testimony.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Well, that has -- that has been an issue for years. I remember years ago the city of New Haven, the Board of Alders passed a local ordinance to -- to ban the sale of firearms within city limits all together, to ban gun shops or other places that sold them. That was challenged and was struck down by the courts.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): And, what the court said that the cities were certainly able to control the location of sales by a zoning power. In other words, you could limit the sales to a certain designated area, but you couldn’t ban them all together because there was an issue of state preemption there.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yeah.
SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): And, because it was a legal product at the state level the municipality couldn’t ban it all together. So, you know, I think that would probably be controlling law in this area.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right, and so if a local ordinance overstepped its bounds, there is recourse for somebody affected by that to go through the court system?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Representative Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, thank you, Senator Looney for your testimony. I just had a couple of very brief questions about this bill. So, as I read it, this bill doesn’t mandate that police do anything in particular; right?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): On Senate Bill 60?

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Correct.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): It’s just that they verify that there is a permit for the gun that they see being carried.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): I guess the reason I ask is just it seems to me that this creates not any procedure for police to follow, but it just creates the obligation that if a person who is open carrying is asked for the permit that they just have to show it.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, then, you know, I -- I understand the 4th Amendment issues that have been raised. I think they’re debatable, but police could -- the police departments could create regulations so that they wouldn’t exercise this option under circumstances that would violate the 4th Amendment; right?

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Yes. I would think that either the Department of Public Safety and Protection or local departments, whoever was authorized to adopt regulations, implement this, would look at all of the practical situations that would need to be dealt with in this term and try to facilitate it to be as -- as little of encumbrance and interference with the -- with the citizen as possible.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Senator. Yeah, it just strikes me that this might be a good way to just prevent the -- I guess the kind of standoff that we saw in Bridgeport instead of having that standoff where people are uncomfortable and it has to be diffused, but instead have a situation where the person shows the permit, and then if it turns out that the circumstances were not justified for the stop, if that’s what it is under the 4th Amendment, then that person might be entitled to some sort of nominal damages or something like that, but we don’t have the standoff situation where people are having to debate about whether a permit needs to be shown, and expects me that -- that’s the primary thing that the laws would accomplish -- or the bill would accomplish, and the police departments could also regulate their own conduct so as not to violate the 4th Amendment.
SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Right, right. I think that -- as I said at the beginning of the context of this, is that the sight of a gun is likely to create fear and concern in the minds of -- of people when they see it even though the person may have a right to carry, so for instance, if there is a demonstration, a highly volatile and highly charged polarizing political discussion going on -- the New Haven Green, and there’s a large crowd of people there, and somebody walks in as part of that crowd and has a plainly visible gun on his hip. Those who are standing near him might have a sense of unease, and I think it is reasonable for the police to determine that that’s -- that that person is there legitimately exercising a right that he has rather than somebody who is by his very presence there with a gun committing a crime.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Senator Looney. Thank you, Chair.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there other questions or comments from members of the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much, Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY (11TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and again, happy birthday. I hope you do get home to celebrate at least part of it with your family.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): [Laughing] Maybe. [Laughter]. So, the order going forward will be Rahim Abdul Wright, followed by Danny Brandt, followed by Dr. Steven Wolf. I will also suggest to people who are here and feel as though they may not get to testify because it may get late that if two people would like to come up, we can give them five
or six minutes together, so if you can pull that off, that might help some people who might be a little bit later.

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Okay. I just want to say I actually practiced this at home, and I was timed at exactly 2 minutes and 23 seconds. [Laughter]. I’m gonna try to keep to that. I’m gonna set my timer right now. All right. My name is Rahim Wright, and I have some concerns over SB 60. I strongly urge legislators of Connecticut to oppose SB 60. Language of the bill would remove probable cause and grossly violate the 4th Amendment. I’m a legal taxpaying gun owner and object to the idea of being detained without reasonable suspicion of a crime occurring since I’m a very busy person who works full time and has a family to provide for. This bill is part of a culture that wants to villainize the 2nd Amendment for lawful Americans just like the proposed animal tax bill. furthermore, I’m also fearful of this Amendment being used to profile African Americans like myself who lawfully own firearms. I don’t mean to disparage any members of the law enforcement since many of them have training to be proficient with firearms at the six-hour academy in New Hampshire, but current events are very troubled for people in my shoes.

Unfortunately, many good people are blamed for the actions of bad people in our society, and that goes for all groups of people -- law enforcement, every group of people in our society. We argue -- we live in a world where people argue about the situation with Philando Castile, and the officer in Hartford that was fired for joking about being trigger happy during a stop. In addition, a police commissioner in Burlington, Connecticut resigned over backlash
due to comments about using deadly force against minorities. Just recently a tense situation occurred in Boulder, Colorado over a man picking up trash on his own property. I also cannot forget about the therapist in Miami that was accidentally shot while complying when a call came in -- a falsely claim that his autistic patient had a gun.

Can every legislator that is in support of SB 60 promise that this bill will ever be abused? Will I be given the same amount of respect as other gun owners? Some may say this bill only applies if you’re openly carrying, but what if your gun briefly shows while you’re engaging in a simple daily task such as fastening laces or paying at a store and reaching for your wallet. Many new gun owners that are new to conceal and carry may struggle with this in the beginning stages, and -- and in closing, I want to dispel any beliefs that I’m antipolice. This is not what I want to express at all. If you ask the Naugatuck Police Station, there was a guy that brought them in three plates of food of jerked chicken, cabbage, and rice and peas. That was me because I support the Naugatuck Police Department. If an officer has reasonable suspicion, I would gladly comply because I want him to use his time efficiently to go after real criminals, and I fully understand that law enforcement risk their lives every time they strap into their boots and get into a squad car and patrol our streets. They have no idea the kind of people that they’re going to encounter, but I believe their time would best be -- oh, it’s okay. Yeah, I believe their time would best be used to keep the suspicion -- reasonable suspicion and -- when asking for permits, and [Bell] I fully support that the [Personal phone
notification sounding] thin blue line protects us from the real monsters in our world. And, I urge you to vote against SB 60 not because I’m antipolice, just because I’m pro Constitution.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you for that.

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Thank you for your time.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. It’s good to see you again. Are there any questions or comments from members of the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. As you’ve been sitting here, you could tell that the profiling aspect of that bill is one of the things that I’m particularly concerned about. In what way do you think this could open you up to -- to profiling and -- did you hear Senator Looney just before you?

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Yeah. I heard most of it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. What did you think?

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Me personally in my own lifetime, I have a college degree. I’m a medical laboratory scientist, and I’ve actually been asked at a store to empty my bag to prove that I was not stealing.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, how do you think that this bill would affect things like that?

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Well, I believe the 4th Amendment is my protection in the Constitution of being unreasonably asked about seizure and being detained.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.
RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: I believe that, you know, if I’m doing something really suspicious then by all means ask me for my permit, but I’m -- and I know people are talking about this bill about a person doing something stupid or weird like maybe walking by a school with an AR-15. I’m worried about me getting gas at Costco. I’m worried about this bill being pushed beyond the person that really is looking for a confrontation versus a person that might be out with his wife at a movie theater. This has actually happened to me at the South Riverview Cinema when I was out with my wife to actually watch Ant Man, and when I was paying, I went for my wallet, and I guess the armed security guard saw me with a mag carrier, and he came over and asked me would I mind going to the car and locking it up in the safe I have in my car. I actually do have a safe in my car, but my response to him is that I have a permit for Connecticut, Florida, Utah, and I’m actually apply for one for Massachusetts right now. I shouldn’t be denied my 2nd Amendment right, but I totally respect that is private property. I told him if you don’t want me here I’ll leave immediately without incident. I would just like a refund, and at that point, he backed off and said, you know what it’s fine. I just wanted to see where your head was at. But I was extremely nervous because when he walked over he already had his hand on the grip of his 1911.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): That being a gun.

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Yeah. It’s a model of gun. 1911 was popular during WWII, but still popular to this day.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, in -- you probably heard Senator Looney saying that in order to pass Constitutional muster perhaps we should require all police officers to detain and -- and question everybody they see with a firearm. How do you think that would affect people in your community?

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Well, I live in Naugatuck, so my community is all over the state because I have family in New Haven, Hartford, Bridgeport, even Goshen now. The thing with that is I work about 55 hours a week. If I’m detained 15-20 minutes, that’s a significant amount of time that I could have been using to spend with my wife who is actually pregnant with our firstborn child.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, thank you for coming in. I very much appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there other -- Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Not a question, just a comment. I just wanted to thank you. Obviously, I know how difficult it was for you to be here all day and still having to go to work and all, so I just want to thank you for taking the opportunity.

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: It actually gives me a newfound respect for all of you guys because you do this every day. I’ve only done this like twice, so it’s not as easy as people make it seem to be a Senator or Representative, so I want to thank you guys for always volunteering your time to do this ‘cause, yeah, you guys don’t get paid enough for this.
[Laughter]. It is like $29,000 dollars, right, a year for this? Yeah, no. I’m good. [Laughter].

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, sir. Thank you for spending the time with us here today. While you’ve been waiting her today, have you had the chance to you know look at the news around the state? The Record Journal? You had mentioned perhaps people calling in falsely claims of people with guns to get police to question people. You had mentioned that concern.

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, I don’t know if you’re aware that a woman had been arrested today for calling in a false report of someone possessing a gun, which called for eight people -- eight police officers to respond to a home, and it turned out it wasn’t true. So, that’s generally along the lines of what you’re talking about here.

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there others? I’m seeing none. Thank you again for your time.

RAHIM ABDUL WRIGHT: Thank you very much.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Next, we’ll hear from Danny Brandt, followed by Dr. Steven Wolf.

DANNY BRANDT: Danny Brandt in Cromwell. It’s nice to hear it’s still light out. I’ve been here at two o’clock in the morning before you people. That’s no
fun for me or you guys. I’m strongly opposed to the safe storage. That’s telling burglars, hey they have a law now, these guys gotta lock their guns up. Let’s go in. Well, they could in my house, and they’ll find out I’m breaking the law, so please don’t do it. I’m 60, I’m from Cromwell, and I had a Cromwell cop tell me, “if I see you open carrying, which I knew, I will demand to see your permit and I will run you.” The reason I ran the encounter I called the cops because there was some activity going on up where I live, and no cops came for a while, and so I decided I’m going to go in the house. I went in the house, took my gun out of my holster, and then when the cops showed up I went out, I got an empty holster, and that’s how the conversation came out. He says, what are you doing with a holster. I says, I carry a gun, and he actually told me that he thought it was his right to demand to see the permit. I got my permit in 1969. It’s a long while I can still carry.

And, then there was a case in Glastonbury where a guy got arrested for opening carrying. The attorney general at the time -- I think you know him -- [Laughter]. Said, no. Open carrying is legal, and I talked to the guy, and he says, yes, open carry has been a law since -- again, so I open carry all the time. I’ve only been hassled really once, and that was in Meriden, and I got stopped because I have a CCDL sticker in my back window, and the guy was a real nutcase. But in the case in Cromwell, I did call the chief and the captain and I told them. They said, no, no, no we’ll take care of it. But pleased don’t pass it, and I call it the burglars rights bill. You know, what’s gonna happen next? Some guy’s gonna kick in a door and break his ankle,
and you guys are gonna say, no more locking doors. It caused an injury. This is all ridiculous -- some of these laws are to some of us people.

So, and I believe we should be able to carry in parks too. If we’re in a park just walking with a dog [Bell], why should we have to store our guns? So, the burglar’s rights bill. I think I’m the first person to mention that today, which I like. We got enough problems with burglars and stuff. Why let them know we supposed to lock our guns up?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there -- Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you for your testimony, sir. I appreciate your patience and waiting to come before this committee today. I want to start by saying that I’m a strong advocate for stronger gun laws including the ones we’re hearing -- some of the ones that we’re hearing today, but I understand that there’s an inconvenience that you faced. I guess my question to you is in the face of the study from the American Academy of Pediatrics that shows that gun laws when they’re -- when we have strict gun storage laws half as many children die; shouldn’t we prioritize that tragedy over the inconvenience that you have faced when whether it’s the few minutes or few seconds as was demonstrated earlier in testimony that it might take to open up a safe storage lock?

DANNY BRANDT: A few seconds -- if someone’s breaking in your house, I don’t care where you got it, it’s gonna take more than 2 seconds to even get to it, and I’ve seen the gentleman who had the gun safe today -- somebody take that and smash it and open. I think it’s -- I got no kids. I got three
cats, and they don’t touch my guns. I think it’s up to their parents, which would testify to say, keep them away from a gun. I had young neighbors that had kids themselves I would not let in my house where I kept my guns. They could not go upstairs. They couldn’t go in the kitchen. They didn’t know why. That’s where I kept my guns. I had one in the kitchen and one upstairs, and they were not allowed, and the never tried. We live in a condo, but they weren’t even my kids, but they were not allowed to go upstairs or in the kitchen.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): But in the face, sir, of the reality that not everybody can be asked to expected to act in a responsible way and keep kids away from guns, and that there are 15-year-olds who go to houses where guns aren’t secured safely but they are secured legally; shouldn’t it then be the responsibility of the state to make sure that everybody follows safe guns laws in the way that it sounds like you may already do?

DANNY BRANDT: No. It’s like Dave Bittnel [phonetic] said -- and he wasn’t lying. He’s one of the best in the world -- stay out of my house. [Laughter]. Stay out of my house. I mean you done enough. You know, you got magazine restrictions now. You know, stay away from my guns, stay away from my house.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. Thank you very much. I thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Senator. Representative Carpino.

REP. CARPINO (32ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Hi, Danny.
DANNY BRANDT: Hi, Christie.

REP. CARPINO (32ND): Not a comment -- I’m sorry. Not a question, just a comment. You’re always here, and I thank you for that because you’re right this is probably six or eight hours earlier than you’re used to, and you and I have lively conversations on this subject matter. Sometimes we agree and sometimes we don’t, but you’ve always been very respectful, and I do want to publicly thank you. Even before I had my pistol permit, you went above and beyond in trying to educate me, and you were the first one to take me into their gun club, and let me fire and educate me, and I think that says a lot about you as a person, so thank you.

DANNY BRANDT: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions from the committee? If not, thanks for being with us, sir. Appreciate it. Next up will be Steven Wolf, followed by Dom Basile.

DR. STEVEN WOLF: Members of the Judiciary Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak here in the hopes that the State of Connecticut improves and strengthens its gun safety laws. My name is Steve Wolf. I am an emergency physician primarily, but I’m also chairman of Emergency Medicine at Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center here in Hartford. We are a level I trauma center and see the majority of gun violence in the city, unfortunately. I am a licensed gun owner, however, and I respect the 2nd Amendment, but I am advocating for mandating the safe and storage -- safe storage of guns in both homes, HB 7218 and in cars, HB 7223. Nothing I am advocating restricts anyone’s right to -- to legally own firearms.
From June to December 2016, six months, the Saint Francis ER had 36 gunshot patients, which is six months. From January to December, 12 months of 2018, we received 62 gunshot victims, a total of almost 100 victims in that time of 18 months. While survival has steadily improved due to advances in emergency and trauma care, the carnage in human tragedy of these incidents leaves a wake of destruction that spans generations. It destroys family, invokes posttraumatic stress on all involved, creates a financial burden that society has to shoulder. The vicious cycle continues through constant violent retaliation in the community. One of the major ways guns enter the urban environment besides the trafficking from other states is the theft of unsecured guns from private homes, often in suburbs, as well as from cars. About 2600 guns were stolen in Connecticut from 2012 to 2015.

Gun violence isn’t just found on streets. In 2014, suicide was the second leading cause of death among youths ages 13 to 17 years, and almost 1300 suicides reported according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and a firearm was used in 42 percent of those fatalities. Unsecured guns loaded or unloaded, and unloaded is irrelevant if the ammunition is not secured as well, become an easy solution to someone who is depressed and suicidal. Pulling the trigger is far easier than planning and carrying out an overdose or jumping off a bridge. If you jump off the bridge, if you -- if you -- if you kill yourself with a gun, it’s -- it’s about 90 percent chance of success versus 34 percent and 2 percent by poisoning. About 90 percent of those that survive a suicide attempt do not to go on to
die by suicide. Removing the ability to impulsively grab a gun and end it would save many lives. Grabbing an unsecured gun allows for the possibility of transient moment not to pass and gives easy access to a devastating opportunity.

Finally, the safe storage of guns in homes with children and teenagers could avoid hundreds of accidently tragic deaths. Safes are not perfect as we heard today, but far better than a cardboard box, and there’s simply no rational explanation that can justify keeping [Bell] unsecured firearms within reach of children. Ethan Song killed last year is just one of hundreds of examples of this. He’s not the first and won’t be the last if we don’t change things.

In closing, as I said, I am a licensed gun owner. Everything proposed is just common-sense gun safety rules that I myself follow. Nothing restricts ownership. The 2nd Amendment is alive and well. Gun ownership comes with responsibility to keep everyone around those guns safe. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Dr. Wolf. Appreciate it. Questions from the committee?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Dr. Wolf, for your testimony, and I’m grateful not only for your advocacy but also so many others in the medical community who face these tragic realities every day in light of the expertise that you shared with us. I’m wondering if you might be willing to respond to a treat by the NRA dated November 7, 2018? Just eager to hear your thoughts. The treat reads, “Someone should tell the self-important antigun doctors to stay in their lane.” And, I’m
wondering how that -- how you would respond to the 
NRA, and -- and whether or not you feel that this is 
out of your lane?

DR. STEVEN WOLF: It’s far within my lane and our 
lane. I remember when that came about. Since we 
probably see more and see it more than anyone else 
most likely in this room except for maybe save a 
few. I think we’re in the position to make a 
comment about that because it is my lane, and it’s 
probably not their lane.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, 
doctor. I certainly agree it’s your lane, and I 
hope that you continue your advocacy in this lane. 
Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And 
thank you, doctor, for your testimony. I had a 
couple brief questions. Throughout the day, we’ve 
heard a lot of people say basically that this should 
be all about education, and in your profession, I 
would assume you see a lot of people who make 
mistakes and pay a severe health price for it. 
Would you say that?

DR. STEVEN WOLF: Correct.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, would you say that 
teenagers make a lot of risky decisions regardless 
of what you tell them to do; would you say that’s 
true from your experience?

DR. STEVEN WOLF: Very true.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, I think it’s important 
to note that education may be a part of this piece, 
but I don’t think that education can play a complete
role. We have to make sure that these weapons can’t fall into the hands of people who are not prepared to deal with them, and in fact, I think it’s significant to note that Ethan Song, as Kristin and Michael testified earlier, he had been instructed about guns and to stay away from them, and in fact, the boy that he was playing with was a graduate of an NRA course. And, so I think there’s an important role for education, but I think it’s also important that we ensure that those who possess guns take the measures necessary to make sure that they’re secured and not accessible to people like teenagers who may make risky decisions with them.

DR. STEVEN WOLF: I don’t think either one is mutually exclusive, so -- and as you -- as you mentioned, the teenagers hear their parents, and -- and we hope that -- and I’m a parent of two grown children and would hold my breath occasionally. They, fortunately, turned out well, but there were times where repeated lessons and repeated instruction -- I wasn’t always sure they heard everything, so the object of this is to keep them as safe as possible, so yes, I agree with what’s been said throughout today is that there is parental responsibility required, there is gun ownership responsibility required, but a partial failsafe is keeping guns in safes. It’s not foolproof. They can be -- they can be opened like was said with YouTube, but why make it easy?

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you. I appreciate your testimony.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions? I’m seeing none. Doctor, I want to thank you for being with us today, and for sharing unique and
interesting perspective, and also highlighting the suicide aspect that I don’t think we’ve touched on yet today, so thank you.

DR. STEVEN WOLF: Thanks for the opportunity.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much. Dom Basile, followed by Alex Villamil.

DOM BASILE: Good evening, Representative Stafstrom and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Dom Basile, and I sit on the Executive Committee of the Connecticut Citizen’s Defense League. I respectfully ask that you support the following legislation: SB 940, CARRYING IN STATE PARKS AND FORESTS. Because might right to life shouldn’t and whenever I cross a boundary line and enter into a state park or a forest, nor do I change into a different person. I am the same fully vetted and licensed person as I was before. HB 5227, REGULATIONS BY MUNICIPALITIES. Because the confusing and conflicting myriad of various municipal regulations can easily entrap a law-abiding citizen. HB 5870, TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND MAGAZINES. Because only those citizens that are grandfathered by registering themselves and submitting their thumbprints to the Connecticut State Police by January 1, 2014 would be eligible, nor would it add to the finite supply of firearms and magazines registered and declared.

I respectfully request that you oppose the following legislation: SB 60, PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT. Because this does away with the presumption of innocence, which is the very bedrock onto which our entire legal system is based upon; and therefore, presents the opportunity for law enforcement to supersede their limited powers. HB 7218, SAFE
STORAGE IN THE HOME. Because this bill is reactive rather than proactive, and does absolutely nothing for safety. Ironically, in order for this bill to obtain its objective of doling out punishment, someone has to get hurt first. A better alternative would be to offer tax credits on the purchase of a gun safe, and to reinstate the education component that was taken out. HB 7219, GHOST GUNS. Because this bill is plagued with onerous language. It does not define what an unfinished receiver is, nor does it address all of the illegally owned, unserialized pre 1968 firearms that are in the hands of collectors and enthusiasts. You cannot pass legislation to uninvent something. In doing so, you will be following the same failed business model as prohibition. You will be taking something that lawful citizens and hobbyist and enthusiasts enjoy doing and driving it underground. HB 7223, STORAGE IN A VEHICLE. Because this bill is completely unworkable. It will create accelerated amounts of public panic, calls to 9-1-1, and an added strain on our police departments. [Bell]. All because a good citizen was just trying to follow the law. I know my time just -- might -- but I’d like to add something that personally happened to me today here at the LOB. I came here, and I asked the Capitol Police for permission to bring in a forged -- a raw forging that I have, which is literally a zero percent lower receiver, and I was pertinently and rudely told by the sergeant, “It ain’t gonna happen.” Then, I came here to listen to everyone’s testimony, and I saw Jeremy Stein of the CAGV produce an 80 percent lower that he stated he got permission from the Capitol Police to bring into this building. I think it’s imperative when the public are here to give their testimony that we
treat everyone on this issue with fairness and equality.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank -- thank you, sir. The -- that issue was dealt with by the Capitol Police and the leadership of the committee. Further questions from the committee? I’m seeing -- Okay. I got a few. Senator Sampson, Senator Haskell, Representative Rebimbas.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and Dominic, thank you very much for being here. Well done. I like how you prepared your testimony very quick, succinct points.

DOM BASILE: All points made.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): I just want to ask you about the last one. You talked about storage in a motor vehicle, and I don’t remember your exact quote, but you said that it would lead to false alarms, and -- tell me what you think about that in a little more detail.

DOM BASILE: Well, it’s completely unworkable because if this were to become the law of the land, in order for it to go into practice, right now if you’re -- for example to enter the post office, which is a gun-free zone, you would in the discretion of inside your vehicle you would disarm yourself, secure the handgun within your vehicle, lock the vehicle, alarm the vehicle, go in and do your business. But now, you would have to put it in a storage box, which they don’t really specify what it is. Typically, assuming that you’re driving a sedan, you have a car with a trunk, that’s where it would probably be placed. Now, you have to visibly get out where now you’re in plain public view, and
now everyone can see what you’re doing. You’re taking a firearm out of your holster. You’re not brandishing a firearm. There would be public panic. People would be hitting 9-1-1. The switch boards would be lighting up [Chuckle], and police would have to respond to that call. Now, there’s just a heightened sense of alertness, and all of this simply because an honest citizen was trying to abide by this poorly constructed law.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Understood. I appreciate that. It’s not something that I think a lot of us have thought about just how it would work and practice. The other one -- safe storage itself in the home. You said that the bill is reactive. Would you just elaborate a little further?

DOM BASILE: Yes, sir. This bill is solely punitive in its content, so therefore, it’s reactive. In order for this bill to take effect, something bad has to happen first. I think it would be much wiser for this legislative body to -- in order to promote safety and awareness to be a little bit more proactive. I for one since Sandy Hook have been promoting that our state government actually enter into a partnership with the citizens of this state rather than be so combative, and I think that to promote and incentivize people to go out and buy a gun safe, that you should be able to buy a gun safe, hang onto the receipt, and then be able to write it off as a deduction on your income tax. I think that that’s a way that this state can enter into a partnership.

The other thing would be the education component. No one should be against education. Knowledge is power. Firearms are dangerous devices. I’m not
gonna dispute that. We’re surrounded by dangerous devices all day long every day in our lives. If you go to a farming community, there are youngsters 14 years old, 12 years old operating farm equipment, operating combines. Those are dangerous devices, but those young people -- those young adults are taught the proper way to handle that particular dangerous device, and they do so on a daily basis. Firearms are the same way.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Excellent answers Dominic. Thank you very much for shedding some light on your thoughts on those bills, and thank you for your testimony.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, thank you for your testimony, sir. I just -- you and I have no disagreement when it comes to proactive laws, and I’d love to work with you and your organization in terms of figuring out what we can do that is proactive.

DOM BASILE: But I forwarded that -- [Crosstalk].

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I want to push back slightly against a portion of your testimony that says, “ironically, in order for this bill to obtain its objective of doling out punishment.” First of all, as I understand from both the authors of this bill but also the advocates here today, the objective is not to dole out punishment to lawn owners. It’s to prevent the death of young men like Ethan Song. It’s to provide some protection to the 40 percent of gun owning households with children who store their weapons in no safe at all. It’s to
address the fact that 2700 children and teens are injured with 110 killed every year due to unintentional shootings, so the objective -- I don’t give anybody on this committee. I certainly speak for myself as an advocate for this law -- is not to dole out punishment.

And, also, we have all sorts of laws on the books, and I’m wondering if you might be able to speak to whether or not you object to our many other laws that are reactive to crimes. For example, drunk driving. In order for drunk driving punishment to be doled out, a crime has to be committed. Something has to go wrong, and I think your tax credit idea is an interesting one, but my question to you is would you be in favor of getting rid of our punitive drunk driving laws in favor a tax credit to those who drive safely year after year?

DOM BASILE: I wouldn’t do one for the other, sir. I would compare apples to apples, and I’m happy to hear you say that you want to work with us, and I’m also happy to hear you -- someone admit that there is room for improvement in that bill, and we will work together on that, so if you did want to do something truly in the name of safety and you did want to do something to really save some young lives, then we can put some good language in that bill because there is room for improvement. We could do things to help put more gun safes in homes, and that’s something that every citizen could take advantage of even if you’re not a gun owner. It’s a safe. You could put anything of value in it. It even has fire attention properties, so you could store valuable documents or irreplaceable family photographs in there. That would be something that this legislature could do that would positively
affect everyone and help put more safes into more homes; and therefore, bring down those numbers that you were quoting. We could also put in the education component that’s been talked about earlier today, and that would also help reduce those numbers, and if the state of Connecticut wants to continue to be negligent and asleep at the wheel for another 28 years and not implement anything, there are things in place that we can put in today. The NRA has a long proven successful curriculum, so does the NSSF, and they have offered those curriculums free of charge, and I don’t see any reason why we can’t implement those until the state of Connecticut compiles one on of its own.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I just want to be very clear, sir, and through you, Mr. Chair. As a Representative here of CCDL, you’re not saying that CCDL is opposed to all punitive retroactive laws, are you? You’re not opposed to all laws that punish people for doing something wrong in favor of tax credits for doing something right; is that correct?

DOM BASILE: No, sir. I am saying that, again -- I will repeat myself again -- that there is room for improvement in this bill, room for improvement where we could put in some good language that would actually have a positive effect and bring down those very same numbers that you just quoted.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well, thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

DOM BASILE: You’re welcome.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative Rebimbas.
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, I just wanted to thank you for your testimony, but wanted to take the opportunity just to address what you had indicated regarding your communications with Capitol Police. I would encourage you following this hearing to reach out to them, and share in more detail your communications and experience regarding your request. They are doing a thorough informational investigation into the individual that brought the item here and the allegation that was made on the record that allegedly Police Chief Perez may have brought it in and then provided it to someone of the public. So, because everyone is being questioned so that we can make sure that we have equal treatment of everyone who comes into this building, and that everyone is held accountable, I implore you to please provide some details of your conversations and anybody else that’s in this room because every one needs to be treated equally in that regard, and then most importantly, the safety of all when rules are applied. So, thank you again for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Representative. Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you for being with us, sir.

DOM BASILE: Thank you for your time.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up will be Alex Villamil, followed by Marty Issac. Alex Villamil. No? Okay. Next up will be Marty Issac. Folks -- before you begin, if folks know of folks who have left, I know folks had other things to do, and unfortunately, may have had to leave. If you know friends or someone who was sitting next to you
that’s left, if you can let the clerks know up front, it will help us be through getting to the folks who are still before us and want to testify. Mr. Issac, you have the floor.

MARTY ISSAC: Good evening, and thank you, Chairman and members of the Connecticut Judiciary Committee. My name is Marty Issac, and I’m a board chair of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I am here today to speak in support of HB 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN VEHICLES, 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME, 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS, AND SB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATIONS OF CARRY PERMIT. Because my time is limited, I will speak to the safe storage bills. My written testimony includes testimony on the other two bills. Before I do so, however, I would like to thank you for all you have done over the past number of years to improve gun safety in the state. It is especially satisfying to me that the legislation passed here in Hartford has been on a bipartisan basis. Your actions have saved lives. Connecticut has one of the lowest gun death rates in the country; yet, sadly, our work is not done. The testimony regarding the death of Ethan Song is haunting. How can it be after all the tragedy we have experienced here in Connecticut that it remains permissible to leave guns unsecured in the presence of children. These horrific events that followed lack of storage practices are “accidents.” They are not accidents. They are foreseeable acts based on the owner negligence.

It’s an awesome responsibility to own a firearm, and while I believe the vast overwhelming majority are responsible gun owners, I also believe we need to be far more aggressive with how we deal with
irresponsible gun owners. Thankfully, this topic appears to be one we can all rally behind. The National Shooting Sports Foundation states, “when not in use, firearms and ammunition should be secured in a safe place separate from each other.” It is your responsibility to prevent children and unauthorized adults from gaining access from firearms or ammunition. The NRA has a similar statement. Store guns so they are not accessible to unauthorized persons. Less foreseeable but more devastating is the issue regarding stolen guns. In 2016, 238,000 guns were reported stolen by the FBI's National Crime Information Center. That is a 73 percent increase since 2005. NBC Connecticut recently researched this topic and found that thousands of guns stolen from communities include Cheshire, Bloomfield, and Glastonbury are turning up at crime scenes throughout the state and the country. Frank Occhipinti, Chief of the Firearms Operations Division for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms said, “The impact of gun theft is quite clear. It is devastating our communities.” Larry King, Senior Vice President for the National Shooting Sports Foundation said, “There are more guns stolen every year, and there are violent crimes committed with firearms. Gun owners should be aware of the issue,” and I would add so should all of you -- our legislators. Yes, of course, we need to punish the criminals that do the stealing; however, if we are going to reduce the number of stolen guns making their ways to our cities, gun owners need to do a better job of securing their firearms at home and in their vehicles; therefore, I respectfully request that you support HB 7223 and HB 7218. Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Mr. Issac. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Oh, Representative Rebimbas.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. Just a quick question. Do you know the breakdown, for example, of the gun thefts, those that were actually stored away versus not stored?

MARTY ISSAC: I do not. I’m not -- I’m not sure. No. I do not have that number.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you. Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Thanks for being with us, Mr. Issac.

MARTY ISSAC: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up will be John Cleland [phonetic], followed by Jake McGuigan.


JAKE MCGUIGAN: McGuigan.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): What is it?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Jake McGuigan.


JAKE MCGUIGAN: Chair, members of the committee. Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony this evening. I have submitted written testimony against both of those I will be speaking against. My name is Jake McGuigan. I’m Managing Director of State Affairs for the National Shooting Sports
Foundation. We are the trade association for the firearms industry. We represent manufacturers, retailers, ranges across the country. We have a membership of just under $10,000, and some of our major manufacturers here in Connecticut include Colt, Ruger, and Mossberg.

I’m here today to state our oppositions to HB 7218, the safe storage bill, and 7219, the ghost guns/3D printing bill. I’ve sat in the audience for the entire hearing today, and cannot understand the anger and outright opposition to firearm safety education or the fact that we need to enforce the current laws on the books here in Connecticut. As mentioned earlier, the National Sporting Shoots Foundation provides safety materials, education materials for those who take hunter education classes, as well as those who take pistol permit classes. Unfortunately, no matter what legislative mandate you put in place, that does not guarantee the safety of others. There has to come a time where personal responsibility is of the utmost concern as opposed to a locking mechanism and depending on a locking mechanism, which can be defeated. The last thing the industry wants is for a prohibited person whether that is a felon, a minor, or someone who has been involuntary committed to gain access to firearms. As an industry, we have invested millions of dollars to ensure that individuals are not gaining access to firearms that should not be. We had a program called FixNICS, which was done nationwide, and we passed it in 17 states to ensure that those who have been involuntary committed that those records are in the NICS system, and they cannot purchase a firearm. We’ve had Don’t Lie For the Other Guy, which stops
straw purchasing across this country, along with Operation Secure Store. I’ve heard numerous times about firearms being stolen. What we realize that that is an issue and Operation Secure Store is something that we’ve done with our retailers nationwide to help them increase the security and stop those smash-and-grabs that happen to their stores. We’ve also gone down the path of suicide prevention education. We continue to hear issues on suicide prevention. Obviously, two-thirds of firearms deaths a year are attributed to suicide, and we as an industry are partnering with others to ensure that we can educate our retailers, get the word out, and hopefully, they can make a difference in someone’s life if they’re coming into a retailer.

And, last but not least is Project Child Safe. The previous witness that came up did make mention of some of our materials that we talk about, and it’s included in my written testimony. It basically says gun storage for your lifestyle. Depending on who’s in the home, if there’s minors in the home, if you live alone there’s obviously various options that you can use to secure your firearm in your home, and we have done Project Child Safe across this country. We’ve distributed over 37 million locks around that -- around the country. And, just a few steps to leave you with before I end. Firearm related fatalities in the U.S. have been decreasing [Bell] since record keeping in 1903, and dramatically in the last 20 years -- 2014 and 2017 are the lowest years on record. Firearms are involved in fewer than 0.3 percent of all unintentional fatalities in the United States. Over the last two decades, the number of unintentional fatalities involving firearms has dropped by 50.5 percent. A lot of that
is due to the proactive approaches that the industry has taken nationwide.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: And, in closing, rather than layering another level of regulation on law-abiding hobbyists and businesses, lawmakers should enforce the existing stringent laws and regulations here in Connecticut.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Thank you, Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I just want to make sure I heard you right. At the start of your testimony, you said you were testifying against 7218 and 7219, which was safe storage in the home and the ghost guns bill?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yes, sir.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Your organization is not opposed to safe storage in motor vehicle, 7223?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I did not go down -- I mean there are some that we are in support of as well, but these are the two major ones that we wanted to point in opposition to.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. You cited that gun violence deaths have been going down over the years, but will you also acknowledge in addition to education that in fact many states including Connecticut have been proactive in increasing its gun safety legislation?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Oh, I agree, but I also think there needs to be a component in that of firearm safety education that is taught to --
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, will you -- will you agree then that legislation taken in the state of Connecticut and other states to regulate firearms and to make our gun laws more restrictive have helped bring down the number of gun deaths in the United States?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I would be one to look at that. I think if you look at the number of gun deaths in the United States, one-third of them are homicides, two-thirds of those are suicides, so obviously, we want to address those issues. We want to address the individual and not the instrument. You know, we have a situation where we have medical professionals coming up here and talking about the firearms industry and decreasing the deaths attributed to the firearms industry. Well, if you look last month, John Hopkins released a study that said that doctors are attributed to 250,000 malpractice deaths a year.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: So, while we’re talking about him straying into our industry, he might want to focus a little bit more on his industry as well.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, let me -- let me ask my question a little bit differently. Do you deny that gun safety legislation has saved lives?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Can you define gun safety legislation?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): The gun laws passed by this legislature in 2013 following the Sandy Hook -- the Sandy Hook tragedy?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I think legislation passed in 2013 was a focus more on cosmetic issues arbitrating
numbers on magazines and limits on magazines. It did not focus on individuals.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): My question was do you deny that that legislation has saved lives?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I would be -- if you would provide me the statistics, I’d be more than happy to look at those.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. So, you don’t have an opinion on it?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: No.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: You’re basing legislation on cosmetic features and arbitrary numbers.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): One other question on safe storage bills. You said you represent manufacturers. Do you just represent manufacturers of guns or do you also represent manufacturers of gun safes?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: We represent all manufactures within the industry, so there are manufacturers -- actually, there are firearm manufacturers that are making safes as well as ammunition manufacturers that make safes as well.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, you represent retailers who make and sell gun safes; correct?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yes, sir.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, by the state mandating that someone has to secure a gun in a safe, wouldn’t that mean more business for your clients?
JAKE MCGUIGAN: It would increase business, but at the same time, we’re talking about a mandate that really is already in place, right. You already have a law in place that is a safe storage requirement. Our retailers continue to hand out, you know, the information when someone purchases a gun that there is a minor in the home that they have to have safe storage. Now, we’re dealing with a bill now, which is again going down the road of expanding it to a different arbitrary number of now 18. You know, will there be a situation if there is a horrific tragedy with someone who is 19, and you’re gonna come back and change that to 20 years old? You know it’s -- you have the law in place. You have the safe storage law in place, now we are basically making changes to it to put in arbitrary numbers.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): The other piece of that bill also requires that an unloaded firearm be held in a safe.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: And, there are court cases including the Supreme Court that says separating and locking unloaded firearms separately is really against the 2nd Amendment and your ability to protect yourself.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, if you could provide those to us, that’d be helpful. Further questions from the committee? Representative Fishbein, followed by Representative Dubitsky.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good afternoon, Mr. McGuigan. Nobody has spoken to this today with regard to the safe storage, and I don’t know if you have some sort of institutional knowledge in your role, but do you know why the law is presently 16 as opposed to 18?
JAKE MCGUIGAN: I do not. I was -- I was not present during the passage of the original legislation.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, Project Child Safe, that is the NSSF program that’s a kin to Eddie Eagle that the NRA does?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: So, actually Project Child Safe is an industry initiative that we have done basically back to 1999 where we have distributed locking devices, cable locks through law enforcement agencies, so if an individual needs a locking device in order to lock their gun, they can go to a local police department, and they will be provided a locking device that is provided through us, and our manufacturers as well have voluntarily provided a locking device with all new firearms sold, so any way you purchase a firearm, you will get a cable locking device in there, and now, you know, we have expanded Project Child Safe to more the slogan Own It, Respect It, Secure It. Right. Obviously, based upon your home living situation like gentleman from CCDL who was here before. He’s 60 years old, he lives at home, he doesn’t -- he has some cats and no children present in the home. He needs that firearm in order to protect himself, so his storage requirements obviously should differ than someone who has children in the home or occasional visitors of children coming over as well.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): All right. I’m just looking at -- there was testimony earlier this morning about education programs that are available through the NRS as well as the NSSF, and I’m on your website, and it appears that through the Project Child Safe Program that there is something that is available to
educators, perhaps parents to sort of inform young people about firearms?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: So, we do have firearm safety education brochures, and we distribute that through many of the hunter education classes here in Connecticut, as well as around the country, so there are brochures talking about firearm safety in the home, firearm responsibility at home, so those are obviously distributed, and we also have videos on You Tube free of charge that are available talking about firearm safety as well.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. You were asked about statistics. We’ve heard, you know, some statistics today, and I’m just trying to figure out do you know how these statistics when they compare to households, one that has a firearm in it and one that doesn’t, how people are able to ascertain that the one without it was safer than the one with it?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I’m not sure how they ascertain that because in a lot of the polling we’ve done over the years, it is sometimes difficult for firearm owners to admit. They will not admit in polling that there is a firearm in the home, so I’m not entirely sure that they’re statistics are correct on some of that because the difficulty is getting many gun owners to admit for obvious reasons.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure. You’d have to agree with me I would believe that you would have to have two almost identical households with both households having the same makeup, the same you know gender race, creed, all of that stuff, and the same exact stressors to have a proper model, and then putting in one household a firearm and the other one not a
firearm because otherwise all of the variables could potentially be different.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Correct. There are -- there are very -- there are a lot of varying variables in that, and same to the chair’s point on obviously the legislation that was passed in 2013 as leading to a decrease in crime. I think there is a lot of factors involved in that, and one of the major factors that we always support is more in law enforcement.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, I don’t know if you were here this morning when there was testimony about the lack of funding for the firearms trafficking task force. As a representative of the NSSF, would you be in support of -- it was originally funded $1 million dollars, hasn’t been funded since that first year -- would you be in support of that being reinstituted and active in our state.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: We would be fully supportive of that and to figure out really the issues that are -- that are a problem in Connecticut, and I have a feeling that that task force will go down the road and come out and realize that the laws are currently in place, and they need to be enforced appropriately.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you for coming in. You mentioned cable locks, and the safe storage bill talks about -- about specific ways that -- that firearms need to be
secured. Is it your understanding that there are multiple ways to secure firearms?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yes, sir.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, what would those be?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: So, in my written testimony, we do have a range of options. It’s almost like a menu that you can have on there, so we talk about a cable lock -- 'cause we’re talking about you know there are situations where people may not be able to afford the $2000 dollar gun safe or the $3000 dollar gun safe, so you have a cable lock, you have a gun case, you have a lockbox, and then you have the electronic locking box, and then a full-size safe as well.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, presumably those could be used to varying degrees in cars?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yes. I mean there are manufacturers nowadays that are making specific safes for vehicles as well.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But in the bill with regard to storage in cars, it has to actually be in a box, in a locked safe box. Is it your feeling that there are other secure ways and means to secure firearms?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Well, the question is, is it a lockbox that they make you bolt to the vehicle? Because if it’s just a lockbox that you can pick up and take out that’s a bit of a problem. If you put a cable lock through a firearm and left it in a -- in a vehicle, I don’t think that’s secure either. You know, it all depends on what they’re trying to
accomplish with that, and based upon the way it’s currently written, I don’t know either.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Your -- your organization represents manufacturers; right?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yes, sir.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Are you familiar with the -- with the manufacturer of firearms?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. In the ghost gun bill, there -- which is 7219, there is a provision with regard to the -- on lines 136 through 141, that requires that the manufacturer of a polymer frame or -- or lower receiver have imbedded in it at least 3.7 ounces of material type 17-4 PH stainless steel. Do you know what that is?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: That is probably referencing the federal law in the undetect -- there’s already a federal law dealing with undetectable firearms.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But in the federal law that piece of stainless steel is not imbedded into the firearm; is it?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: No. It is not. It just needs to be composed of a certain amount. Like, if you look at a GLOCK firearm, the lower receiver is basically plastic, but then the upper is basically all metal. There are no -- the problem you have with this is that I think the bill itself is dealing with two issues. You’re dealing with the ghost guns, and you’re dealing with 3D printing. Both of those issues have been vilified through the media that it’s, you know, a major issue for whoever wants to deal with a public safety issue, and at the end of
the day, 3D printed guns -- hey, I’m lucky if I can get my itinerary to print out you know to get on an airplane, let alone print out a 3D printed gun, and anyone that’s going to shoot one of those is probably going to be a little bit crazy in and amongst itself as well. This is not something where people are printing firearms using them to commit crimes. It’s a very costly process, and the same thing on the -- you know, on the ghost guns. I mean nobody is getting an 80 percent receiver and going into their garage and banging around with a hammer and creating a -- you know, fully functional (inaudible - 08:01:41) rifle.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but specifically with regard to this 3.7 ounces of type 17-4 PH stainless steel, it -- am I correct that under federal law that piece of metal is not attached in any way to the firearm?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I would have to double check on that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Are you familiar with the term security exemplar?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I am not.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. I’ll -- hopefully, somebody in this room is -- I’ve been asked a lot of people, and so far, nobody’s been able to tell me what that means. But thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative Labriola.

REP. LABRIOLA (131ST): Thank you for your testimony. I just I thought I heard you say the words the Supreme Court decision or maybe it was
some various federal courts that ruled that it would be a violation of the 2nd amendment if -- if there was a requirement that both a -- a gun and the ammunition were made to be stored separately; did I hear you correctly?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: That was in the Heller case where basically the restrictions in the District of Columbia said that the firearm had to be locked with a locking mechanism, as well as the ammunition had to be in a separate location also locked, and in that decision -- and I will provide that to the committee -- there is basically saying it is unconstitutional to -- because you are in a situation where you cannot defend yourself or your home because of that situation.

REP. LABRIOLA (131ST): Yeah, I think that would be helpful. Thank you for providing that. Thank you.


REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. A couple questions. So, wasn’t it the case in D.C. v. Heller that the court actually decided that if the weapon was rendered completely unusable for self defense that -- that would violate the constitution; right?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: And, then the question is what is completely unusable?

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Well, if -- if a handgun, for instance, is in a safe and the ammunition is also in a safe -- whether or not it’s loaded or not -- then to gun would be completely unusable would it?
JAKE MCGUIGAN: Once again, when -- when you know you have seconds to defend your life, I don’t think anyone wants to be fumbling with a box of ammunition trying to load their firearm in order to defend their life or their family.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, did you witness earlier some of the safes? I mean you represent manufacturers that make safes, so you know that there are safes that can open in a heartbeat with a fingerprint or a quick code, so it doesn’t take much time to open a gun safe; does it?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: No. I mean there’s biometric safes, there’s code safes, and like I said, based upon our -- our position there are different safes for different -- different people depending on your home situation.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, the D.C. v. Heller opinion also said, “Nor correspondingly does our analysis suggest the invalidity of laws regulating the storage of firearms to prevent accidents.” Do you disagree with that statement?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: All I’m saying is that we’re dealing with a safe storage issue here. There is already a safe storage requirement here in Connecticut law. Now, we are going further down the line to arbitrarily put another number in and make it 18 years old. There is no firearm safety education component in there, and I think that needs to be talked about and thought about in there as firearm safety education is paramount, right. Any -- any of these locking devices we talk about can be defeated as you’ve heard throughout testimony throughout all day. And, if it can be defeated, how about we focus on the individual and firearm safety education first
before we worry about an arbitrary number of 18, 16, 14, whatever that age, you know, restriction would be.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, you don’t have a problem with the existing statute; do you? That governs safe storage.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: No. Once again, mandating you know human behavior, it’s difficult to legislate bad parenting or a situation where you have you know firearms in the home, and they are accessible to minors. Yes. That is a problem, and we agree with that.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, you think that -- that gun owners have a responsibility to store guns safely, and that that responsibility should bear criminal penalties if -- or you don’t oppose it -- criminal penalties if it’s violated?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: No. I -- well, for us, it’s difficult to prove the criminal penalties, you know, at the end of the day as -- as to whether it was stored securely, not, you know stored securely or what have you. Once again, based upon our position as an industry, depending on your home situation, mandating me storing it in a certain fashion if I am a single person at home with no children should be different than someone that has, you know, kids at home and occasional visitors as well.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, so the only real -- you mentioned the age change, but the only other real change to -- from the current statute of the bill for safe storage in the home currently is that it applies to weapons that are not loaded. That’s a pretty minor change; right?
JAKE MCGUIGAN: It’s not minor if you need to defend yourself for a home invasion.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, but I mean does it -- does it matter one way or the other if the gun has to be locked up, if it’s unloaded you still have to take time to load it, then if it -- I guess my point is that it’s pretty easy for someone to get in -- if the ammunition and the gun are both accessible, it’s pretty easy for someone to put the two together; right?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Correct, but now we’re dealing with a situation if that is easily defeated how -- what does your bill accomplish? All right. What did the bill accomplish if it’s so easy to take that ammunition that’s stored in that lockbox and that firearm that’s stored in that lockbox and put them together?

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): It prevents the person who should have access to either from getting to either ‘cause they’re both in a safe.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: We’ve heard all day along about how easily defeated these devices could be.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): We’ve also heard from a variety of people about how they would prevent a number of different kinds of individuals both in terms of children but also in terms of criminals from gaining accesses to these devices, and they would act to a -- act as a deterrent.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yeah. I mean like I said before the last thing the industry wants is a prohibited person to gain access to firearms, whether that’s a felon, whether those who have been involuntary committed, or whether that’s a minor, so yes.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, you don’t really have a problem with the change of -- that you know a loaded weapon should be safely stored in and unloaded weapon should be safely stored?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I’m going to continue to go back that legislative mandates on individuals that are trying to defend their home or their family is not the way to go down that road. It’s not a one-size-fits-all approach, and it shouldn’t be.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, it’s true also that this statute does not mandate that you have to put the weapon and ammunition in a safe if you’re actually carrying it or have it within easy reach; isn’t that true?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: It depends on how you read it.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): I mean it’s what the bill says.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Not really -- I mean it says safe storage within the home.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): It also says in exception that if you are carrying it on your person that’s considered safe storage.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Correct. On you’re person. I mean I’m not walking around my home with my firearm on my belt [Laughing] in my kitchen.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. Well, I won’t doubt, but you can read the bill later. I think you’ll see that it says basically what I say it does. And, lastly, I would just say -- actually, I would ask does your organization support universal background checks for all firearms purchases?
JAKE MCGUIGAN: Universal background checks from our standpoint is we need to make sure that the system is not broken. We have focused on getting the appropriate background checks, appropriate records into the system. We’ve done it up to Northeast, we’ve done it in the West and down in the Southeast, making sure that those people who are federally prohibited from owning a firearm can no longer receive that firearm through a background check, so in my -- we are opposed to it because you have a situation where the data is not in the system. There continues to be people that can pass background checks that should be in that system because either the state is not supplying those records or the judicial branch is not supplying those records or those within the mental health community are not supplying those records, so you can expand universal background checks all you want, but when it comes down to it, there is still retailers that have a situation where they are not comfortable transferring a firearm because they are not 100 percent confident in the system that’s in place or that the states are sending those records, so no.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, you do not support universal background -- mandating universal background checks for all gun purchases?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: No. And, that has nothing to do with here in the state of Connecticut.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): I disagree.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Okay.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Good afternoon. Thank you very much for your testimony. I want to just hone in on a few -- and thank you, Mr. Chair -- a few specific elements. One is that you use the word arbitrary, but then almost in the same breath, at least in the same paragraph, you used the word minor, and I’m wondering why -- what makes you think that the age of 18 is an arbitrary line to draw when there are so many things to change about a person’s life when they turn 18 from being able to vote perhaps is the most important and relevant today. So, how -- what makes you feel that 18 is an arbitrary? If it’s the arbitrary nature of the line that we’re drawing that your organization objects to, what’s a better age that you might suggest?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: [Laughing] Well, I’m not gonna get into negotiation about age. I’m just simply stating that right now the current law is 16, right, so now you’re talking about 18. You know, I’m dealing with legislation in states that want to basically make it illegal for someone between the ages of 18 and 21 from owning a long gun -- a shotgun or a rifle, okay; so why -- why is that a case and why is 21? When you can have an individual serve in the military at 18, 19, 20 years old, and they come back and they are not allowed to purchase a long gun. You know, we’re dealing with a situation that we’re just -- what’s the difference between 16 and 18? Why not 17, why not you know 15? It’s just an arbitrary number. No different than if you look at you know magazine capacity. Why are we selecting 10 rounds? What’s so magical about 10 rounds, you know, when you pass the magazine restriction here in Connecticut. What is that number?
SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): But isn’t it a little bit like the speed limits? The important thing is that we are drawing the line almost more than where we draw it? For instance, 61 miles an hour isn’t so much more dangerous than 60, but because we have to draw a line, we just -- law enforcement officials in their expertise decided 60 and not 61. Isn’t there some value in drawing the line as opposed to saying we’re not going to draw any line at all because you find 18 to be too arbitrary?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Well, how many different speed limits are there across the country? If we’re going to start going down that neighborhood.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well, it varies -- [Crosstalk].

JAKE MCGUIGAN: But if I leave here and drive, you know, to Massachusetts or Rhode Island, I’m probably going to come across four different speed limits, so why is it different on this road compared to that road?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well, the roads differ --

JAME MCGUIGAN: Yeah.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Dramatically in terms of the safe speed at which one can travel, but the point of -- of it -- of the question is that at every single one of those roads, law enforcement officers have made a decision whether it’s arbitrary or not, 70 miles an hour is safe or 40 miles an hour is safe, and 42 miles per hour is not safe, so I’m just sort of defending the notion that we have to draw lines even if some may characterize them as arbitrary. But I want to hone in on another element of your testimony, and that’s the words -- the term
bad parenting that you used. Is it your belief that the 40 percent of gun-owning households in which guns are not stored inside a safe that those parents are bad parents?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: No. Once -- once again, I said depending on the situation, depending on the home situation depends on how you should lock your firearms, right, so you know, now you’re courting -- you know, we could talk about gun legislation last year, and people say, well, there’s 15 percent of home owners or homes have firearms in it. Now, all of a sudden that we’re dealing with a safe storage bill, now it’s magically 40 percent of households, which is great for us.

SENATOR HASKEL (26TH): No. I didn’t say it’s 40 percent of houses have guns in them. I said, and I’m quoting from again the American Association of Pediatrics -- 40 percent of gun-owning households with children do not store their guns in safes. It’s a very different statistic from anything that was --

JAKE MCGUIGAN: And, what do they classify as safes? Once again, you can look through my written testimony. Depending on that situation, depends on you know is the safe a lockbox, is the safe a biometrics? I mean what are they classifying as a safe? What is that locking device?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well, let’s say that they’re stored in a cardboard box. Would you categorize those parents as bad parents or I guess perhaps refraining the question that 110 children and adolescents who are killed every year as a result of unintentional gun violence when guns are not stored safely; do they have bad parents or how
can we say that this is a flaw in parenting as opposed to a flaw in our laws that allows these guns to fall into the wrong hands?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Well, you already have a law here in Connecticut, so -- and they’re essentially breaking the law right off the bat.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): But we don’t have the law if the gun is not loaded; right? That’s why we’re here today?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I mean [Chuckle], okay. Sure.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Just one final question, if I may, Mr. Chair, through you. I understand your organization has funded $18.6 million dollars in the wake of Sandy Hook lobbying against gun violence prevention legislation. Has your organization also spent any amount of money on education, which so many folks have testified about today in terms of getting greater gun safety training into the hands of schools or students or adolescents or their parents?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Well, if this committee would allow us to, we’d be more than happy to do it.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank you for your testimony.


REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I guess just some clarification. I believe in the beginning of your testimony, you said what your organization did for education; is that correct?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Yes.
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, the materials that you put out for education; is that correct?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Correct.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Has that changed since the beginning of your testimony?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Nope.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Okay.

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Well, I didn’t want to bring that up, but you know I did talk about everything that we distribute. We have -- we have free You Tube videos on there, and actually, DSI has made mention of NSSFs, you know, firearm safety education.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): I just want to make sure that the record is clear, and that there’s no misinterpretations because I think that there’s a lot of statistics that’s being thrown out, which I would love to see. Obviously, the documentation regarding that as well. I’m going to hone into the most important statistic that I believe is in order for us to see whether or not legislation that we currently have is working and whether or not changes need to be made in order to reach the results that everyone is hoping for here today; do you have any statistics regarding weapons that have been used by minors -- it could be 16 and under or 18 and under. I almost don’t even care what age, but from weapons that were securely stored in homes versus not securely stored; do you have those statistics?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Those statistics are a little bit more difficult to get because the numbers are so low in all honestly. You know, we have an industry intelligence report that I will provide and one on
the committee that lays out unintentional firearms fatalities, and they are at the lowest levels ever, so I would be happy to provide that. Now, determining whether that was in a locked box or not, they don’t break it down to those, you know, specifics, but most states we are dealing with under -- under 10 fatalities a year.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, that’s my concern is we don’t have the statistics that we need, which is to determine whether or not it was in the lockbox from the very beginning. Do you by any chance have any statistics regarding thefts of weapons either from home or vehicle of weapons that were actually secured?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: Most of our data is dealing with retailers and smash-and-grabs in retailers, so we don’t necessarily have the data dealing with individuals in their homes, but obviously, that was the other thing that I talked about -- our Operation Secure Store in that we’re dealing with working with our retailers to implement, you know, pretty astringent security standards for those stores to -- to avoid that.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, I appreciate the testimony that you provided that with each new weapon as well that’s purchased that there’s conversations regarding storage and/or a storage box provided; again, but we’ve heard testimony regarding, you know, how faulty even that can be. That’s why I think it’s so important for us to determine what’s working and what needs to be actually changed and have the statistics and information behind it because we could pass as much legislation as we can every session and say, this
must then be working or this must then not be working, but unless we have the statistics to show it’s working or not, it’s a very difficult decision that we’re doing up here, and we want to make sure I think we all want to reach the same results, but we need to do it in a way that’s educational in the sense of having the information we need. Thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions? Representative Dubitsky, again.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. Very quickly. You previously testified that over the last number of years, I think you said 20 years the number of gun deaths in the country has decreased drastically. Over the same period of time, what was the -- how many guns were sold and were in circulation? What -- with, you know, if you’ve got a decreasing -- decreasing incident of guns used in crimes, is there a corresponding decrease in the number of guns sold?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: So, our statistic in that report, which once again I will provide to the entire committee -- unintentional firearms from 2007 to 2017, so basically just a decade timeframe -- firearm related fatalities declined by 20.7 percent, while gun ownership increased around 38 percent.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Do you have any statistics going back further?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: We have statistics dealing with over the last two decades talking about firearm fatalities have dropped over 50 percent over the past 20 years, so once again, I will have all that, and these are all stats from the CDC.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, and during that same period of time, where has gun ownership gone?

JAKE MCGUIGAN: I can get that percentage, but it will have grown. Not the number from the 2007, but it has increased tremendously.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.


JONATHAN HARDY: Good afternoon, everybody. My name is Jonathan Hardy. I’m a resident of both Meriden and Hartford while I’m going through some medical stuff, so back in my old hometown a little bit. Senator Winfield, I thought you and I were gonna have birthday cake together. It’s going on a long day here, man. So, first of all, I’m going to say I strongly oppose SB 60, and that concerning the presentation of a carry permit. It’s already been hashed a lot here. I’m the permit specialist for CCDL, and I could tell you, it’s also been a gateway drug in many instances for other stops. You want to compare it to a DUI checkpoint like was said earlier. Look at any DUI checkpoint. How many drunk driver’s do they check? No, but they catch a whole hell of a lot of everything else at these DUI checkpoints that have nothing to do with -- with drunk driving, so I mean that comparison is ridiculous.

All right. Let me see. I also strongly oppose HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. What really hasn’t been discussed enough here, especially when we’re talking about the
21-foot rule, and that’s called the tutelage rule. I’m a firearms instructor. I’ve been teaching for over 25 years. The tutelage rule simply stipulates that in 21 feet somebody can have a blade or other weapon against a person with a firearm and very vast majority, well over 90 percent of the time, that the person that has the blade could come out to be the victor because of the time it takes to access your firearm. You want to add an extra layer in-between for somebody to defend themselves when at that very time -- I don’t know how much you understand what goes on in a self-defense situation.

You got a caveman portion in your brain that’s gonna kick in. Fight or flight’s gonna kick in. Tunnel visions gonna kick in. More adrenaline is gonna kick in. You’re gonna fumble with a little box, which by the way our hacker space had a competition, and the winners were a seven-year-old girl and a nine-year-old girl that broke into those boxes in less than 60 seconds, but that’s another story. You got all these things going on, and you think someone’s gonna fumble with biometric ID? I’ve seen people all day trying to log into their damn iPhones, and they can’t get into the iPhones because it won’t read their fingerprint. Women have a harder opportunity with biometric safes then men simply because of fingerprint issues. Ask the state police, the Bureau of Identification. They will tell you that. They do a lot of fingerprints because of that purpose.

So, this bill will create more victims. I haven’t heard enough about those victims being spoken because you’re barring access to them making it more difficult. Yes. Any extra step is a life or death situation.
Ghost guns. I’ve heard so much of this, and I do, Representative Dubitsky, I can tell you what that exemplar is by the way [Laughing], but it’s ridiculous. They are not untraceable. They have metal in them. The metal doesn’t have to be in the frame, but the gun doesn’t work with just a polymer frame, so you need to have other parts that go along with it. If you want to shoot an all plastic gun. Go ahead. I don’t want to stand next to you because it’s gonna blow up, but that’s another story all together, and I’ve made both polymer guns, and I’ve made metal guns. I’ve got some registered scary assault rifles that I’ve built when it was legal to do so with serial numbers on them, and I can tell you it’s not as easy a process as many people have been saying.

The act concerning storage of a pistol or revolver in a motor vehicle. Again, it’s not like many people are actually storing firearms in motor vehicles. [Bell]. I do know of some very rare cases where that was the case. I heard the bell. I’ll be quick.

State parks. Gun owners pay more money in taxes than non-gun owners do, but yet, we don’t get the access to parks or the ability to defend ourselves.

And, the regulation of firearms by municipalities is a horrible idea. Several towns have gotten rid of their little -- their codes, especially New London and New Britain when it came to open carry years ago because it was a problem.

And, I support the act concerning the transfer of assault weapons of large and large capacity of magazines. I don’t think it goes far enough. There has to be a better way to do this, and facilitate
this process as well. I’m available for any questions that you may have.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you for coming in. Tell me what a security exemplar is.

JONATHAN HARDY: It is the sample amount of metal that is used typically by the ATF to be able to trigger off the metal detector, and of course, that number can vary between manufacturers and sensitivity of various metal detectors and everything else, but typically, even if you take the oldest, weakest metal detectors, you’re not gonna get any of these guns through because of the fact that the slides are metal, the barrels are metal, the ammo is metal, so you’re gonna even with older technology, you’re still not gonna be able to smuggle an undetectable gun in.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, this is from federal law?

JONATHAN HARDY: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, the exemplar is a hunk of metal, which is 3.7 ounces of 17-4 PH stainless steel. Is it imbedded into the gun?

JONATHAN HARDY: It doesn’t have to -- well, it’s gonna be part of the gun. It doesn’t necessarily have to be like the part most people are talking about manufacturing like the frame of the gun. So, it could be the slide, the barrel, guide rod, various other components that are going to be metal or say if you said like a frame for like a handgun,
like a polymer handgun that people do make, you can still put a plug in there that’s gonna have the metal annuity to meet the regulation there as well, so.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But under federal law, the security exemplar is not part of the gun; right? It’s a separate piece of metal that you run through the -- the --

JONATHAN HARDY: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Metal detector; right?

JONATHAN HARDY: It’s more or less like a calibration tool, but they’re saying this is how much it takes to set off a detector.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, you take this piece of metal that’s shaped like a gun -- a little piece of stainless steel, run it through the metal detector, right --

JONATHAN HARDY: It doesn’t have to be shaped like a gun. It just -- they want to say that this mass of metal can trigger this detector.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, and you watch the magnetometer run, and then you take your actual completed gun with all the parts and all the steel --

JONATHAN HARDY: Yep.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Run it through?

JONATHAN HARDY: Yep.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And --

JONATHAN HARDY: And, I don’t think polymer guns have been able to -- they’ve never gotten small
enough, and I don’t think they ever will. It’s physics.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, do you see any basis or any reason to actually take that security exemplar and try to imbed it into the gun?

JONATHAN HARDY: Again, like some of the questions with Jake McGuigan earlier, you’re -- you can sit there and we can go on to doing this, that, and the other. I as a law-abiding citizen when I manufacturer my personal firearm or if I’m trying to improve upon a design, it’s not gonna matter. I’m going to follow the law, but a criminal’s not gonna do it. I mean if you go look at the firearms that they’re finding in prisons, look at the firearms they’re finding in South America that people are home manufacturing, I can go to Home Depot and give you something that functions.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Are there other members with questions or comments? If not, I’m hoping that we don’t share that birthday cake. [Laughter].

JONATHAN HARDY: Hey, it’s my birthday in 5-1/2 hours.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Happy birthday tomorrow. We will next hear from William McCarthy [phonetic]. Is William here? Brent Peterkin [Phonetic].

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [Off mic] He’s not here.


UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [Off mic] He crossed himself off.
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): He crossed himself off, okay. Brooke Cheney. While that’s -- is Steve Erlingheuser here? Hyde Harman here?

HYDE HARMAN: I’m here!


UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [Off mic] He’s not here.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): John Cooper is not here. Michael Pickard. Mr. Harman, while we’re looking for the other person, can you come forward? I’m going to let Mr. Harman go, and then let -- Brooke can go right after ‘cause she wasn’t in the room.

HYDE HARMAN: Is this thing on? Can you hear me? I was just going to come in initially and just read the bills that I was against, but I noticed today they talked a lot about education, and I was down at an outdoor show in Pennsylvania about four or five weeks ago, and the NRA was there, and I says to my wife -- I live in Voluntown, and for the record, my name is Hyde Harman, and I live in Voluntown. A very small town. So, I think if they had this Eddie Eagle program, maybe I’ll just pay for it myself, you know, donate it to the school. I went down and talked to the NRA, and they said, you don’t have to donate anything. We will give it to the school, so it is -- it is a resource that’s available for free, and I’m sure with gun clubs all over the state and people who are trained in teaching gun safety that you can get volunteers. You won’t even have to pay teachers. You would just need a small block of time to bring volunteers in, and they could do that.

And, then the other thing is you’re talking about SB 60, and about showing that permit. My son was
driving down 395 about a couple months ago. He was speeding, so they pull him over, license and registration make sure it’s his car. Well, what he does is he puts his pistol permit in with the other documents. He didn’t have to. He wasn’t asked about a gun or anything. He presents it to them. The officer looks at it, and says, oh, are you carrying a gun. He says, yeah, it’s on my right hip. Okay. Please step out of the vehicle. Obviously, keep your hand away from your right side. The officer takes the gun and runs a check on the gun. So, all this morning I kept hearing, especially from the Police Chief in Bridgeport, you’re just gonna show the permit if you’re carrying in the open and that’s gonna be it. I certainly don’t believe that. I think once they say okay, the written is good, is your gun good? Do you have a registered gun? I don’t think it’s gonna be as simple as they were saying this morning. I mean it’s -- people point out I kind of picked up this morning, but that’s why I am opposed to SB 60 because I don’t think it’s going to be a very simple show your -- our ID, show your permit, and leave.

I also oppose the act concerning ghost guns for the well stated comments people already heard here. To me, it’s just another form of registration. I don’t own a ghost gun, but I do have pre ’68 guns that do not have serial numbers. They were made that way. You know, you have standard manufacturer names on them and stuff, but they just didn’t have -- especially in the shotguns. They do not need to have serial numbers.

Also, safe storage of firearms in a vehicle. If someone breaks into my car, either they’re gonna take my car and everything that’s in it, or they’re
gonna pick up that lockbox, small safe, or -- and they’re just gonna run away with it. They may not even know it’s a gun. They may think it’s money in there. And, I raised three children, always had guns around the house, and I felt as a parent it was my decision, it was my responsibility, my and their mother [Bell] to teach the children good safe gun practices. I think I ran out of time. [Laughing]. Is that okay?

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): You did, but you did great.

HYDE HARMAN: Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Questions or comments from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your time.

HYDE HARMAN: Thank you for hearing me.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Brooke Cheney, and Brooke will be followed, if they are here, by Michael Pickard [phonetic], Holly Sullivan, and Deborah Pauls.

BROOKE CHENEY: Hi. Good evening. Sorry, I was out ordering pizza ‘cause I haven’t eaten anything today yet. So, my name is Brooke Cheney. I’m a mom, a wife, a daughter, a sister, and a friend. I’m also a firearms instructor, as well as competitive shooter. I’m also a pacifist, suicide survivor, and victim of sexual assault. I know what it is to be a victim. I have met some of the evil in the world. I come here every time with the wish that we could stop talking about 2nd Amendment rights and more gun control, and focus on the issues that would actually save lives such as suicide prevention, but our time is limited.
In my written testimony, you will see that I have included the safe gun handling rules from the NRA and Jeff Cooper’s rules of firearm safety, which my children at 11 and 12 know how to recite, and they are aware of what to do. I am here in opposition of SB 60, 7218, 7219, but I am here for once to be a supporter of a bill, and I am very excited about this. I want to thank you for bringing forth SB No. 940, AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN PERSON’S TO CARRY IN STATE PARKS AND STATE FORESTS. As a woman and a firearms instructed, I am also excited to be here in support of this bill. I know many women who love outdoors sports; yet, feel vulnerable at times out in the middle of nowhere and no help that can be called if needed. I am my own first responder. That is what all of my police officer friends remind me. I also know from my students that you’d be making many women happy if you were to pass this bill. As a parent of small children, when my kids and I are in the woods, I am the protector of my family. It could be anything around me -- a sick animal, a person who intends to do harm. When you train with a firearm, it gives you more confidence. One of my favorite things as an instructor that I love is seeing a fearful woman walking into my class, then a confident woman with a perma-grin walking out realizing they have control over a firearm. It is not the other way around. This is absolutely a women’s rights bill, and I thank you for bringing it forward.

For those of you who don’t think guns are every used successfully or regularly for self-defense, I can send you to my website called Save Thousands, Not Just One ‘cause when people say they want to save just one life, I think their bar is way too low.
Those of us who train in self defense know that just training and being aware of what to look for can help deter a crime. We don’t ever want to use our gun if we don’t need to, but it’s nice to know we have the option if needed, but as always a last resort.

As far as an act concerning the regulation of firearms by municipalities, I support and applaud this bill because as a pistol permit safety course instructor I have seen what challenges people have applying for permits since many towns vary in their application process. Having our gun laws and regulations be uniform across the state just makes sense. And, I’m gonna stop there. [Laughing]. So, thank you again. [Bell]. Oh, look at my timing. I almost had it done.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): That was perfect. Are there comments or questions from members of the committee? Representative Dubitsky. [Laughter].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. There’s a reason I always look down that way. [Laughter]. Thank you for coming in. You talked about the bill preempting local regulation of firearms. Do you have your students come from various places, and do you travel at all for your training?

BROOKE CHENEY: I do. Actually, one of the things I left out is I am a competitive shooter, so I travel to clubs all over the state along with all over New England, and actually all over the United States, so I travel on a regular basis.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): When you’re on the highways, do you always know what town you’re in?
BROOKE CHENEY: No. Not at all, and one of the reasons I support this is not even that part, but just I see the difficulties that we already have just in the pistol permitting process because my students come to me and because I’m the instructor, they expect me to know everything that’s going on, and like what do I have to do in my town? I’m like I can tell you what the state requires, but I can’t go beyond that because every town gets to manage how they run their pistol permits, and there are certain towns that ask for just what the state requires, and there are other towns that ask for -- like whenever -- I’m from Harwinton, and one of our neighboring towns, Winsted and I think Torrington as well asked for a letter of recommendation for example, and there’s other towns I’ve heard that actually asked for an interview with the Police Chief and all that sort of thing, so I just know already regarding firearms laws that the pistol permitting process is confusing enough, and I’m like go to your townhall and get the application and it outlines everything, but with that, as a person just driving through Connecticut, it’s not like I would know ahead of time of all the towns, nor would I want to go look up all the regulations.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Now, when you train your -- what -- what kind of students do you have?

BROOKE CHENEY: At Great Start Shooting School, my primary student -- I market mainly towards women just because being a woman in the firearms industry. Women do like to be taught by women often, and when I opened the school, I really thought it was going to teach only women, but I’ve allowed men who accept learning from a girl that I will teach them too.
[Laughter]. But primarily, it’s women, but I do get people from all over the state.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Are any of your students looking for training for protection from abusive situations?

BROOKE CHENEY: Yes. Absolutely. I actually have [Clearing throat] one former student who her husband had almost beaten her to death. He had left her in a ditch after beating her with a shovel, and he was sent away to go to jail, and then when he was being released on parole, she knew that his parole hearing was coming up, and it was likely that he was going to be able to get out because he didn’t kill her, so he didn’t have life. So, because she survived, she came looking for more training because she knew that he was gonna come after her again because he had said so multiple times that I didn’t finish the job the first time, I’m sure I’ll finish it the next.

So, this is definitely why an act authorizing people to carry in state forests makes sense to me because I do know lots of women who do come to me for self-defense, and one of the things I tell my students also is owning a gun does not make you safer. Having the training and the knowledge how to safely be aware of how to handle that firearm is what makes you safer. Having the confidence of walking in and not having a clue about how to safely handle a firearm, when you learn how to do that the amount of confidence it instills -- ‘cause I still remember that first time that my husband wasn’t the one packing my bag. It was I went up and I knew what to put in my bag, and I’m like I feel like Wonder Woman because it gave me that confidence, and as women, because we tend to be looked at as victims often, just the effect of me putting my shoulders back and
putting my head up and looking around the room makes me safer and less of a target, so for me, my blessing as a firearms instructor is being able to teach women the confidence, and it’s not about the firearm. It’s about the confidence and being aware of your surroundings.

**REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):** Okay. The students that you have that are in those situations; how would it -- how would they be affected if there were 169 different sets of firearms regulations that if there -- that would affect them if they were trying to travel around the state?

**BROOKE CHENEY:** Well, there’s actually a book out called three felonies a day, and it currently talks about the amount of just legislation and laws across America, and how none of us sitting here realize that we generally commit three felonies a day because there are just such a large amount of laws on the books, not -- you know, regardless of firearm laws specifically, but as a gun owner, just knowing what the existing laws are is challenging enough, so if we were to have to then figure out what town I’m in and what law, then I don’t see how we don’t all instantaneously become criminals.

**REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):** Okay. And, do you -- which law do you teach your -- your clients? Is it state law, or do you try to teach them the individual law of each municipality?

**BROOKE CHENEY:** Actually, with the NRA basic pistol course, we do not teach law. It is on the onus of the firearms owner to know what the laws are both federal and state.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, how do you think it would affect -- do you -- do you think that it would deter victims that you know of and that you’ve trained from protecting themselves from their abusers if they had to -- if there was a separate law in 169 different towns?

BROOKE CHENEY: Well, I can’t talk for my students. What I can say is just the safe storage laws that we have before us today make me nervous. I am a responsible gun owner, but I’m still human. I can still screw up. I can still come home from a competition late at night after traveling across the states, bring my gun bag into the house, lock my doors, and go to bed. Now, someone breaks into my home after I’ve had a long day, they steal my guns, and now I’m a felon. So, regardless of every other town, just the safe storage law makes me concerned because someone broke into my home, stole my firearms that no I didn’t have locked because I made a mistake, and now you’re gonna take me, a mom of two small children, away from my family because now I’m a felon. This is where I am losing any -- I don’t want to say faith, but I’m wondering where the humanity in these laws really is because I’m getting punished for being human, and accidents do happen. So, I can’t talk for my students, but I can talk for one of the things I am concerned about as a gun owner.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And -- and is it -- are you concerned at all about the possibility of being unintentionally caught up in a law that you were unaware of in some other town?

BROOKE CHENEY: Oh, absolutely. I mean as it is, it’s hard enough to keep track of the existing gun
laws, and it’s sort of like motor vehicle laws. There’s tons of motor vehicle laws out there that none of us know, but they’re out there, and it’s just a matter of enforcement as well.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, thank you. Thank you for coming in. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, I guess now, Brooke. How are you?

BROOKE CHENEY: I’m good. [Laughing].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, you know I can totally identify with you with women that come to your pistol permit class and they gain the confidence ‘cause like I do a lot of divorces, and I call them my butterflies because women come to me as a caterpillar, you know. They’re shy and they can’t look you in the face, and we go through the process. It’s very enriching for me when they gain their confidence, so I can totally identify with that.

You were talking about the permitting process though and different towns how they have their own rules, and I -- I think -- can you give me some examples of those?

BROOKE CHENEY: So, [Clearing throat] -- Excuse me. Per state statutes, you must go through a background check. You must have fingerprints, and what else -- there’s one other thing that’s state statute.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You have to do the application.
BROOKE CHENEY: The application, right. Your background check and all that good stuff. In different municipalities, they have those basis where they start, but then they go on to different requests like I was -- got my pistol permit when I was in Winsted, and they also asked for three letters of recommendation, and then other people have said that there is -- you get your three letters of recommendation, and you also need to sit down with the Police Chief and have an interview, and then one of my students, who unfortunately I can’t tell you which town it was, but said that they actually wanted a letter of recommendation from their boss was another caveat that they needed to bring into the police department in order to apply for their pistol permit.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, are you aware -- because those things are not in the state statute --

BROOKE CHENEY: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): These are just rules created by the police chief so to speak in a particular town. What happens when -- when somebody doesn’t comply with that local rule? They’ve done the safety course, they’ve paid the money to the state, they’ve done the application, they’ve got the fingerprints, and let’s say they’re not a prohibited person; what happens to these people with their permits?

BROOKE CHENEY: Well, for the most part, everyone complies because nobody wants to argue with a police officer, so -- and also when you’re brand new into the firearm arena and you’re applying for your permit for the first time, you don’t realize that the only thing that you actually have to do are the
state requirements, so when I go to the police department and I get my package that tells me what I need to do, I just follow down what the package says, and I do that.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, you’re not aware of anybody who has not complied with that and the ramifications of that?

BROOKE CHENEY: No. ‘Cause like I said, nobody wants to argue with a cop.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, are you aware of towns that have asked for HIPAA authorizations in order to issue a pistol permit? Have you ever heard -- heard about that?

BROOKE CHENEY: I have not heard about that. The getting an interview with the police chief was the most sort of intimidating one that I’d heard that kind of stuck out, and then asking for a letter of reference from your boss, and I believe there’s also some that ask for letters of reference from your family or wanting to talk to your whole family and/or your neighbors, so throughout Connecticut, there’s already a wide variety of -- variety regarding getting a pistol permit.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

BROOKE CHENEY: You’re welcome.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions or comments from other members? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much, and thank you for -- we had good conversation, so thank you for that as well.

BROOKE CHENEY: You’re welcome.
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Next, we will hear from Michael Pickard [Phonetic]. Is Michael here? Holly Sullivan.

HOLLY SULLIVAN: Can you hear me now? All right. Dear distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Holly Sullivan. I am a resident of Southbury, Connecticut. I’m primarily here focused on two bills today that I’d like to talk about. The first being 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITY. Some of you might recall that last year in the town of Southbury there was a proposed ordinance that would prohibit gun owners from being in possession of their firearms on any town property as well as at town events, and this turned into quite a debacle. This would mean that I would have to go home and leave my firearm before being allowed to use the same privileges as other taxpayers. I could not even bring my child inside the town library to use the restroom. One of the proponents of the ordinance stated in an article in the Waterbury Republican American that “Emotions often overtake rational thought, and therefore, permitted gun owners should not be allowed to carry at town events or be in town buildings.” Like many women in my town, I do my grocery shopping, pay my car taxes, and attend church alongside of the proponents of that ordinance. Myself and hundreds of other women in my town who are legally permitted to conceal carry codes this peacefully among those who do not every day. The notion that my emotions may overtake my rational thought is outright offensive. There are many law-abiding gun owners in my town. Women like me are non-threatening and contributing members of our community. We code this peacefully without
incident on a daily basis; yet, fear mongering in a small town resulted in absolute division and tension unlike anything I have ever seen. For months, nasty debates went back and forth in letters to the editor, at townhall meetings, and neighbors argued. Almost 1000 people packed our high school at a public hearing. A normally peaceful community was torn apart, so I strongly urge this committee to support HB 5227, so that women like me who have been granted a permit by the state of Connecticut do not have to fight to keep our right because of the ludicrous notion that my emotions may overtake my rational thought.

Next, I would like to seed that I’m opposed to 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. Had the Board of Education implemented such a program in 1990, which actually addressed safety, we might not be debating this issue again tonight. I am a single parent of a five-year-old child. While my child is regularly exposed to discussion not to touch firearms and to alert an adult, many children in our state are not so fortunate to have that foundation. The state has missed the opportunity for the past almost 30 years to prevent tragedy through education. We advocate for safety education for children in other matters that have safety risks such as driving and drug abuse. Do not push through another bill that is intended for children’s safety without providing for necessary education. [Bell]. As currently written, this bill is not good enough, and additionally, it will slow me down in the instance that I need to reach my firearm.
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there questions or comments from members of the committee? Senator Sampson.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for being here today, Holly. I know we talked briefly offline, and you told me about an incident that occurred at your home that has to do with the safe storage bill. I just -- I’d love to give you the opportunity to share that with the entire committee.

HOLLY SULLIVAN: Absolutely. I’d be happy to. Sunday Morning, July 15 of this past year of 2018, five o’clock in the morning my Ring camera system went off. I was asleep as you would imagine at five o’clock in the morning on a Sunday morning in the rural community of Southbury. There were two repeat offenders in my driveway. I woke up. It took me several minutes to understand what was happening, to see that they were in my cars, to see that they were four and a half feet from my living room window. These two offenders are both habitual offenders that have been in and out of the prison system many, many times. I interacted with both of them in that instant. It took me a good scary three minutes to go across the intercom, realize what was happening, engage with both of these people, ask them what they were doing because my fight or flight is pretty strong. One thing that I am not is timid. I chased after them. I went out my front door. I made visual contact. I saw the car that they were getting away in. I alerted the Southbury Police Department. I had video footage to the police department before they were at my house. They identified that vehicle. Those individuals were caught that night before they left the town of
Southbury. They were charged on 29 counts. Malachi Johnson is one of the people who was at my house. He is back in prison right now. He was recommitted on November 21 for first degree assault. I don’t want to hear from anybody that this bill won’t slow somebody down. I will tell you that at five o’clock in the morning when you are a single mother with a five-year-old child asleep two bedrooms away, it takes time, and you don’t know what’s happening. So, for somebody like myself who is trained, who is educated, who takes her responsibility to be armed and secure and have cameras and all of these things as much training as I do, this bill will slow me down. There’s no doubt, and I -- you talk about these small safes, and yes, I have a safe in my car. I have a safe in my nightstand. I think I probably have a safe in every single room of my house. In that moment, until you’ve lived it, it’s gonna slow you down. And, I don’t know how much I can stress that, and those small safes you talk about theft -- if one of these individuals had crossed my threshold and actually made it into my house, that small safe that was held up this morning, do you think that they can’t take that with them? Of course, they can, so I will tell you education is the key. I have a five-year-old child who at the age of four she’s never touched a firearm. It just is what it is. I’m an NRA instructor. I feel strongly about it. My five-year-old has never touched a firearm, but she knows a heck of a lot about it. She has a pink toy from Cabela’s that we practice safety with. It’s a pink toy. That’s all that it is, but she understands the difference between an orange tip and what a real gun is, and we practice drills, and at four-years-old, she made her first social media video talking to other four-year-olds about knowing
your target and what’s beyond with a plastic toy because that’s how serious we take it, and she knows she’s not allowed to touch that plastic toy without my permission. That’s what education does, but what these bills don’t do is stop real criminals because I’ve lived it. And, I take this so seriously. This is part of my every day, and to know that Malachi Johnson after he was in -- at my house is now back in prison for assault; what could have gone differently if I hadn’t woke up, if I didn’t have the alarm systems? Both of these individuals have been in and out of prison. Casen was charged with 14 counts. Malachi was charged with 15 counts. If you guys don’t think that this stuff isn’t going to slow us down, you’re sorely mistaken.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you very much, Holly. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you. Are there others? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for your testimony.

HOLLY SULLIVAN: Thank you.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Deborah Pauls. John Westlake.

JOHN WESTLAKE: Good evening, members of the committee. My name is John Westlake, from Coventry. I thank you for providing me this opportunity to speak before you. This is what makes America great. The country of the people, for the people, and by the people. I’m gonna take a different approach to what’s being spoken about today. The 26, February 1991, I was a mechanized infantry squad leader during the first Gulf war. Our unit was involved in one of the deadliest battles of that war ending in
multiple casualties on both sides including 2 U.S. servicemen being killed, 14 wounded by friendly fire. Once the commander realized there was a friendly fire incident, he immediately ordered a tactical pause to allow our unit the opportunity to regain situational awareness. I feel that the state of Connecticut at this point is treating law-abiding citizens -- well, law-abiding citizens of the state have become in essence victims of friendly fire. The population of the state is 3.5 million. Just real quickly while I was sitting here, I decided to check some stats.

In 2013, handguns were used in murders 40 times -- keep in mind 3.5 million. Rifles were not used, period. AR-15s, whatever, were not used. Shotgun was used once -- 3.5 million, okay. And, those stats are -- are pretty much the same way going back ten years with the exception of Sandy Hook incident, which it’s one of the few times that a rifle was used to commit murder in this state. What I would like to see happen -- because what has happened is it’s become a contest about us versus them -- pro-gunners against anti-gunners. They hate each other, all right. You’re not gonna get many results with that sort of environment, all right. An olive branch needs to be extended. Both sides need to come together somewhere in the middle and work something out, all right. I’m sure things can happen that can appease folks on both sides of the topic in general. I’m not here to speak on any on particular bill. I would like to see all of these bills tabled until further notice -- the pro-gun bills and the anti-gun bills tabled until both sides can reach out, extend an olive branch, and say, hey,
let’s sit down and come up with something that will work out for both sides, all right.

For instance, all right, now let me give you an example. Say somebody was standing behind that curtain and you heard six shots being shot; would you be able to tell what kind of a gun it was fired from? A revolver or an AR-15 -- six shots are six shots, all right. So, a bullet is a bullet. Ask Abraham Lincoln, all right. So, a bullet is a bullet. A revolver is basically a semiautomatic weapon. It fires one round with each squeeze of the trigger. An AR-15 is no different. It fires one round with each squeeze of the trigger. If somebody was behind that curtain, you wouldn’t be able to tell a difference, all right. What else do I have here.

We would not be here today if it wasn’t for Sandy Hook. Recently, an awful lot of information’s been released concerning Adam Lanza, and I know this might be a hard pill to swallow, but you know, blaming (inaudible - 09:01:23) is like blaming a parked car outside of the bar at closing time, all right. Adam Lanza had no business having access to that gun, and here we are today talking about locks and all that sort of stuff, all right. His mother is to be blamed for those 20 deaths, all right. His mother -- nobody else. She was his parent for 10 years.

Before I run out of time, I’d like to mention one of the 5th grade homework assignments that was just made public. Some folks who have been keeping up may have already heard about it. It’s called the Big Book of Granny. He was ten years old. There was a homework assignment that he wrote. It was
supposed to be sort of like a comic book like Calvin and Hobbes. I’m just gonna pull one sentence out of that. “When they arrive at the daycare center, Dora sends Swiper the raccoon inside to distract the children. Then Dora enters and says, let’s hurt children.” He was ten years old when he said that, all right, fifth grade, and then on top of that he got caught later at school trying to sell copies of this little book for 25 cents a piece when the school administrators had to get in touch with his parents about that, and that’s some of these reports that have been made public. So, that tells me the school was aware of his violent tendencies as well as his parents, and apparently Mr. Lanza was part of a -- you know, I guess sort of a pro-gun environment in the home. We don’t hear anything about Mr. Lanza, but if we look and dig, they all used to go out shooting as a family -- the two boys and the two parents. Mrs. Lanza failed on so many issues. I call it poor parental judgement -- PPJ, and you can apply that to almost every mass shooting that’s taken place.

Another example is that little boy -- son of a doctor who was a running chair in the state a few years ago -- father let him use his machine gun, fully automatic, at the range, probably a ten-year-old boy. I can’t remember. Pulled the trigger, killed himself, shot himself in the head, all right -- PPJ.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you.

JOHN WESTLAKE: I wish I had a little more time, but I’m gonna end it so everyone else gets a chance. Oh, well, I’d like to add one more thing that since came out in --
SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Sir --

JOHN WESTLAKE: Steven Sicinski III state attorney’s report -- while he dependent on his mom -- the report says -- Lanza had no emotional connection --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Sir --

JOHN WESTLAKE: To her.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Sir.

JOHN WESTLAKE: She once -- yes.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): You’re time is expired. I’m sure there are probably some questions.

JOHN WESTLAKE: Sure.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Yeah.

JOHN WESTLAKE: All right.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Are there comments or questions from the committee members? No. Okay. Okay. All right. Thank you for your testimony.

JOHN WESTLAKE: Thank you for allowing me to be here. Greatest country in the world. There are a lot of people in other countries that wish they had this ability --

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): Thank you.

JOHN WESTLAKE: To speak to the lawmakers.

SENATOR WINFIELD (10TH): We’ll hear from Po Murray. Is Po here?

PO MURRAY: All right. Hi, my name is Po Murray. I’m the chairwoman of the Newtown Action Alliance formed after the Sandy Hook tragedy. I live in Sandy Hook. I raise my four children there. This
is nine hours we’ve waited, and I applaud everyone for waiting to provide their testimony. One hundred and five people will die from guns while we’re waiting her to testify, so it’s really critical, and I want to clarify that there are more gun deaths than knife deaths. I just want to clarify that for everyone, so that we’re on the same page. The Newtown Action Alliance stands with the Song family and Connecticut Against Gun Violence and others to support the following gun violence prevention measures to strengthen Connecticut gun laws. We support 60, 7218, 7219, 7223.

We do not support the gun lobby groups being in our schools to educate our children. We do not support our tax dollars being allocated for the NRA, the NSSF, or any other gun lobby group. They have spent, in particular the NSSF, have spent nearly $19-million dollars to lobby against all and any gun laws including safe storage and child access prevention laws while lobbying congress. I mean while opposing state’s gun laws.

The programs are used to increase gun ownership in an era when gun ownership is declining. We also oppose the following bills that prevent the gun lobbyist guns anywhere to anyone agenda, and the state limit on the power of towns and cities to regulate firearms. Those of us in Newtown should be able to regulate firearms in our community after what happened. Just imagine for a moment if Adam -- if Nancy Lanza had locked up her guns and prevented her son from accessing the AR-15 and high capacity magazines in Sandy Hook. Just imagine if Ethan Song’s best friend’s dad locked up his gun and ammunition properly in the town of Guilford. Just imagine if 18-year-old gunmen didn’t have access to
an illegal gun that was used to kill Clinton Howell in Bridgeport, and just imagine if the Greenwich High School sophomore, Bart Palosz, didn’t have access to a gun to commit suicide in 2013. It’s critical that we pass safe storage laws to prevent gun thefts and injuries, and promote responsible gun ownership.

Newton Action Alliance has been closely tracking 3D and ghost gun issues since last summer when the state department led by Trump’s Secretary of State settled the case with Cody Wilson from Defense Distributed. We worked with attorneys general from Connecticut and beyond and Fred Guttenberg from Parkland, to stop the distribution of the 3D gun files [Bell], and 3D and ghost guns are meant to circumvent our laws. And, quickly, we also believe that 3D guns and ghost guns must be banned. In California and New Jersey, they’ve banned it already, and many states are working on it as well.


SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I just wanted to give you an opportunity based on your experience in advocating in the years after Newtown’s tragedy to expand a bit on your advocacy against 3D printed guns and ghost guns in Connecticut if there are any elements that you weren’t able to cover in your testimony.

PO MURRAY: Sure. Yeah, three minutes goes by really fast. So, the reason why we need to be concerned about ghost guns is because it has been used already in gun massacres. In 2013, a 23-year-old who had been kept from purchasing a gun years
earlier used a home-built AR-15 style semiautomatic rifle in a rampage in Santa Monica, California, which left five people dead. In 2017, Kevin Janson Neal massacred five people and wounded nine others in California as well, and then just last month a -- a man named Eric McGinnis from Texas was sentenced for using 3D gun technology and ghost gun parts to build his own untraceable AR-15, so it is a clear and present danger, domestic and international because anyone can download these files and build their own AR-15s of weapons of war.

SENATOR SAMPSON (16TH): Thank you so much for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Senator. Further questions from the committee? Representative Rebimbias.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening. Thank you for your testimony. [Clearing throat]. Just touching upon the education component because I know in your testimony you had indicated that you didn’t want any gun lobby groups having any education in the school system. Would that be for all lobbying groups for anti-guns, in favor of guns? But what is your thoughts regarding education itself?

PO MURRAY: Well, gun violence prevention groups are working to prevent gun deaths. We do not oppose gun safety regulation; whereas, the gun lobby organizations such as the NRA, the NSSF, and others are spending millions of dollars to oppose any and all gun laws including universal background check system, which is supported by 97 percent of Americans including 97 percent of gun owners; therefore, I think --
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Redirect you back to the question.

PO MURRAY: Right.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): I’m not asking how much money your organization or any other organization does in supporting or opposing legislation that’s not before us today. I’m just asking on the educational component because I know your group does education, they do education, so I’m just asking your opinion on education in -- in general. Would you be in favor of having education in the school system?

PO MURRAY: We believe that we should allow doctors, etc., to speak to the children about education, and right now, I don’t have an opinion about whether or not gun violence prevention groups should be in the schools, but I definitely know that the gun lobby groups should not be in our schools. They had a guns everywhere to anyone agenda, and they should not be in our schools.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Again, let’s just redirect the responses to the question. I understand that you’re trying to get your points out, but I just need the responses to the questions. So, you mentioned the doctors; is that doctors in their offices or are you foreseeing doctors going into the school systems? I’m focusing on the school system.

PO MURRAY: Right. There has to be another way for children to be educated on gun safety. My children when they go visit their doctor, they already discuss it.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Okay.
PO MURRAY: They discuss safe guns and safe storage, etc. when they visit their doctor.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you. And, I know you were talking about the 3D guns and ghost guns also in your testimony in response to the Senator’s question. Were -- how do you feel about one of your members having brought in the gun part that you saw displayed here today?

PO MURRAY: So, Jeremy brought in that gun part to demonstrate that that is actually legal, right, at this point in time in Connecticut. In Connecticut and federally it is -- it’s legal to bring that in here unless you as, you know, the committee decides that it’s not legal.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Okay, and --

PO MURRAY: That’s why we want to -- the ban on ghost guns and 3D guns.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): And, I’m questioning because I just was determining what type of message you were sending in the sense of we’re talking about ghost guns having different pieces and people being able to put pieces together in the form of a gun, so that’s why I was inquiring as to your position regarding a member having done that.

PO MURRAY: He was trying to make a point, and he made that point very clearly.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you for your testimony.

PO MURRAY: It’s not illegal for him to bring it in here.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you -- [Crosstalk].
REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): But that’s -- that’s being -- [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you both.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you both.

PO MURRAY: Mr. Chairman, I would like to finish my comment.

REP. REBIMBAS (70TH): Thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.


LISA FREUND: Good evening, chairs and members of the Judiciary Committee, and thank you for giving me this opportunity. My name is Lisa Freund. I am from Guilford, Connecticut. I have lived there most of my life. I’m a homeowner, a mother, and I support the Constitution, and I am not anti-gun. My family comes from -- my family is a family of police officers, hunters, military, we cover all the ranks. I am testifying in support of HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. The day of January 31, 2018 will be a day I will never forget, and a day I wish never happened. That Wednesday afternoon, I received a phone call from my son that still sends chills down my spine. My son was terrified, out of breath. He was not making any sense. I knew something was terribly wrong. Leo was finally able to communicate that Ethan had been shot. He did not have any details but that Ethan’s brother Evan had reached out and needed a ride to Yale New Haven Hospital to get to his brother and to
his family. Leo was so scared that he was locking all the doors to the house, hiding upstairs in his bedroom because he did not know what happened. He did know that a gun was involved. I instructed Leo to call one of our friends to come get him, keep him safe until I arrived. The feelings of anguish swept over me like nothing I had ever felt in my life and do not ever want to feel again. When I think of what I felt, I cannot begin to imagine what the Song’s and other families go through those unbearable days and the days that have followed since and will go on forever.

This misery and grief and heartache did not have to happen. The father in this instance and the son gave a false sense of security to these children. The son had taken an NRA safety course, and the father had given these children instructions on the use of guns without parental consent, which means they did not know what was going on, so no matter what they were teaching them, they don’t know what this other parent was teaching them. Ethan did not need to lose his life that day of January 31. That gun should have been properly and safety secured so that no one had access to them. That is a simple responsibility that lies on the gun owner. I support HB 7218 to assure that another child does not lose their life senselessly so family, friends, and entire communities do not have to live through a tragedy like this. No one will recover from this tragedy, but we can prevent it from happening again and again. Please support HB 7218, and keep our children and families safe. We have the right to life as everyone does the right to carry a gun. Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Thank you very much for your testimony. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks so much for being with us.

LISA FREUND: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thomas Maloney, followed by Diane Rotnem.

THOMAS MALONEY: Hello, Representative Stafstrom, committee members. My name’s Tom Maloney. I’m from North Stonington, Connecticut. I’m just gonna run through the for and against. I support SB 940, authorizing the carry of handguns in state parks and state forests; 5227, regulation of firearms by municipality; and 5870, transfer of assault weapons and large capacity magazines. I am opposed to Senate Bill 60 -- I’m here every year for this one -- AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT; HB 7218, as currently written; 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS; 7223, storage of a pistol or revolver in a motor vehicle.

I’m just gonna finish on -- or focus on a couple bills here. Regarding the three bills I listed support for, I ask you to consider how many times you have heard those who oppose these bills to cry the 2nd Amendment supporter’s unwillingness to compromise. Compromise means give and take, and yet, I don’t have a single example where gun owners have seen anything -- any beneficial bills come about. We have only had our rights taken with no compromise from the supporters of gun control. These bills being considered today represent an opportunity to recognize that one of the most law-abiding segments of our society deserves something out of this legislative process as well. None of
these bills take anything away from someone else or have any conceivable negative impact on public safety. For instance, SB 940, regarding carrying in a state park or state forest -- something I visit our state forest in Eastern Connecticut quite a bit. I am perfectly legal carrying a sidearm on the roads leading to a park or forest, and yet, because of an arbitrary and bureaucratic reasoning, I cross a line that suddenly makes the same activity illegal. No logical person can claim that we trust someone on one side of a property boundary and on the other. Even more absurd, I’m a licensed hunter. I can drive to a state forest, park outside, secure my defensive handgun in my vehicle, remove a rimfire handgun, and go hunting in the same forest that I can’t carry other gun in. I urge you to consider these three proposed bills favorably.

Regarding my opposition to SB 60, again, as I mentioned, this bill’s become a perennial favorite of the anti-gun groups, and every year, we’re forced to remind the committee that 4th Amendment rights apply to all. The marginalization of any group -- the marginalization of any group by diminishing their rights hurts all Americans. If ever there was an example of a slippery slope principle, this bill exemplifies it. There is simply no justification for stopping someone who is obeying the law and demanding that they show papers to prove that they’re obeying that law. As a society, we wouldn’t stand for this in any other context. Due process [Bell] is the cornerstone of American justice, and no segment of society deserves less.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.
THOMAS MALONEY: I urge you to oppose bill SB No. 60, and I’m happy to take any questions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks so much for being with us. Oh, Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. With regard to the show-your-permit bill; do you have any experience or do you have any -- any anecdote that you know of that would be affected by this situation if that were passed?

THOMAS MALONEY: I personally don’t. I, you know, I just really and honestly where I live, I live in rural Eastern Connecticut. We tend to be more gun friendly there. Even if I did open carry, and I don’t choose to, I’d probably, you know, would be happy to show my permit, but there’s -- I really object to the difference -- and it hasn’t been clarified here today -- there’s a difference between showing your permit because you’ve been asked and being compelled. And -- and I really think the 4th Amendment rights are what’s being overlooked here, that we’re saying everybody deserves 4th Amendment rights except for this group.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. When you came here tonight -- or this morning -- I don’t know what time you got here --

THOMAS MALONEY: Very early.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Can you identify all of the towns that you traveled through?
THOMAS MALONEY: From North Stonington, I can identify all of them, but it’s more than a dozen I’m sure. It’s --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. How would your trip have been affected if you -- if there were a separate firearms law in each of those towns?

THOMAS MALONEY: It would be terrible, and it’s like so many of these bills. It’s that ambiguity of we are trying to obey the law, we’re trying to be law-abiding, and it keeps getting harder and harder because of ambiguous language in some of these laws, and -- and particularly the ability in this case, and we’ve heard about it, you know, in other testimony. There’s so much variety or diversity in how the different towns do the permitting process. Now, if we extend that to I can drive on state roads but not town roads in one town and not the others, and we’ve seen in the past where towns -- and I don’t remember the specifics. Some say that you could only legally open carry. Others you couldn’t open carry, you know, it’s -- it’s the wrong road obviously to go down. Let something that’s guaranteed by not just the -- we talk a lot about the U.S. Constitution, but also the Connecticut Constitution is very clear in our, you know, 2nd -- in that case, the 15th Amendment -- Article 1, Section 15, you know, codifies that, and to let towns arbitrarily start to make up their own laws is just unfair.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I think the -- tell me about the -- the Connecticut Constitutional provision ‘cause it seems like that would be most applicable when it comes to having each of the towns create their own regulations.
THOMAS MALONEY: Well, it states that every citizen has a right to keep and bear arms. There’s less -- there’s no of the language that has been debated in the past around the notion. It’s actually more clear than the -- the federal Constitution, and so I don’t see how towns could go the route that some of these towns would want to go without being in violation of the Connecticut Constitution.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. I appreciate your time. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

THOMAS MALONEY: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks for being with us. Diane Rotnem, followed by Don Spearman [Phonetic].

DIANE ROTNEM: Chairman Winfield, Vice-Chair Stafstrom, Ranking Members Kissel, Rebimbas, and distinguished members of the joint committee on the Judiciary, my name is Diane Rotnem. I’m a clinical social worker living and practicing in Guilford where I have been a mental health provider now some 30 years. Prior relevant experience also includes faculty member in the Yale Department of Pediatrics, Child Study Center, and National Center for Children Exposed to Violence. I come to this hearing in strong support of House Bill 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME, and House Bill 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN VEHICLES. The story I have to tell is from the perspective of a child and family therapist in a community shattered and traumatized by a tragedy resulting from unsecure weapons and ammunition.
In the particular tragedy to which I refer, the victim’s family and friends received and continue to receive an overwhelming outpouring of support as it should be. However, less attention has been given to the far-reaching effects of such a tragedy on the greater community despite the fact that many children, tends, adults did not know this family and victim, they experienced profound emotional reactions. It is this population which experiences a secondary victimization after such a trauma or what I have come to refer to as collateral damage of gun violence.

So, in my coming here today, one of my objectives was to try to broaden the scope of our thinking about who are the victims, not only the immediate victim and immediate family, but the community, certainly our community, and spread to other communities in the state, throughout the state. To those who say that gun violence is not a public health and safety issue, I strongly disagree. I have seen firsthand the emotional devastation of a community which was caused by the irresponsibility of leaving weapons and ammunition unsecured and accessible to minors. Gun violence is a public health crisis, and it is an epidemic proportions in our state and in our country.

I won’t go into describing all of the -- the symptoms, but let me say that I and my colleagues in the aftermath of the tragedy continue to be responding to acute distress and symptoms, much which was resulting from reactivation of earlier trauma in the lives of our own children and adults in our practices. And, because of the confidential nature of my work, it was not possible for me to discuss openly what I was personally experiencing.
[Bell], but I learned that my experience wasn’t unique as it was for other health and mental health professionals.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

DIANE ROTNEM: May I just close by saying --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yep.

DIANE ROTNEM: But I come here today attesting to the global nature of trauma suffered by whole communities, and we must do whatever is possible, even if these are beginning steps to prevent this further occurrences.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much, ma’am. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. I want to thank you for being with us and spending the day with us. Don Spearman, followed by Steven Bale --

STEVEN BALESHISKI: Baleshiski.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Balesh -- Bal -- say it again.

STEVEN BALESHISKI: Baleshiski.


STEVEN BALESHISKI: Hello. That’s probably the ten-millionth time my name’s been said wrong, but that’s okay. [Laughter].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): You should see how people pronounce Stafstrom, so.

STEVEN BALESHISKI: [Laughing] So, we’ve discussed a variety of bills today, but I’m here to give a statement about just one particular bill, SB 940.
This bill would allow citizens with the proper permits to carry handguns in state parks and forests. SB 940 deals with where innocent people who have passed background checks, taken gun safety courses, acquired the proper permits, and legally purchased firearms can carry said firearms, and it removes a state-imposed barrier on self-defense when people are in state parks and forests. Citizens who legally purchased firearms and who passed the background checks, take the gun safety courses, who don’t commit crimes, should be allowed to defend themselves when they’re out in the woods where I would suggest they’re no safer out in the woods and in the parks than they would be anywhere else. Then the people who are likely to commit violent crimes they don’t respect the law, so they’re not going to -- they’re not going to recognize a prohibition on them going with a gun if they’re going out with the intention of victimizing people. They’re already disregarding the laws that prohibit them from victimizing people. The only people who would observe that ban are the people who are honest and innocent, and this dramatically tips the scales to the benefit of violent criminals, and to the detriment of honest people.

A responsible government that cares about the average person does not make it harder for average and honest people to protect themselves, so I ask you to tip the scales back in favor of good people by passing SB 940 without delay. Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks so much for being with us.

STEVEN BALESISKI: Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up I have Isabella Segal and Avi Jarett.

AVI JARETT: Avi. [Laughing].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): What did I -- I butchered it.

AVI JARETT: It’s Avi Jarett, but that’s not --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): You know what, I apologize. Some of this is my pronunciation and some of it is a typo on the -- on the sheet.

ISABELLA SEGAL: Hello, everyone. My name is Isabella Segal, and I am 17.

AVI JARETT: My name is Avianna Jarett. I’m also 17, and we’re from Wilton, Connecticut.

ISABELLA SEGAL: We run Connecticut Teens Against Gun Violence, a youth-run organization focused on mobilizing youth leaders and working towards gun violence prevention on a statewide level. We are testifying in support of HB 7218, HB 7223, HB 7219, and SB 60. Since February of 2018, gun violence prevention has been on the forefront of our minds. We’ve worked tireless with the help of Connecticut Against Gun Violence on rallies, meetings, townhalls, and marches. All to work towards a safer Connecticut.

AVI JARETT: One bill that hits particularly close to home is HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. Growing up, my grandparents kept firearms all throughout their house. They were usually unlocked and easily accessible. As my grandmother got older, she developed dementia, which prompted my grandfather to eventually lock the firearms in a safe. My
grandmother became paranoid, and she also falsely believed that there were intruders or other threats in the house. She could have easily acted on these delusional thoughts and harmed either herself or others. I’m lucky enough that my grandfather knew to lock up the firearms, but some families are not as lucky. Safe storage is proven to save lives, and it is a crucial step in preventing gun violence.

ISABELLA SEGAL: Not only does safe storage prevent accidental deaths, but it can help prevent suicides as well. According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, in 2016, 28 percent of suicides were committed using firearms. As someone who has suffered from mental illness and knows countless others who are suffering today, I believe this bill is necessary to help save lives. I’ve sadly lost friends to the accessibility to firearms. We’re lucky enough to be sitting here today telling our story, but it could have just as easily been us. Letting people die because of something as simple as the way we store our guns is simply not acceptable.

AVI JARETT: We could go on and on about the dangers of ghost guns and the necessity to requiring individuals to show their permits because all of these bills are extremely important. We know they may not solve everything, but they can make an incredible difference for so many.

ISABELLA SEGAL: We wish we didn’t have to be here fighting for our safety in front of all of you today. It is our right as citizens of Connecticut to feel safe in our communities, and these bills are a step in the right direction. Before we conclude, I’d like to pose this question. What is more important -- the lives of Connecticut citizens, of
teachers, students, of brothers and sisters, or our right to leave a gun unlocked on the bedside table? Is that right worth Ethan Song’s life? Is that right worth ours? Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. And, I agree. I wish you didn’t have to be here today, but I want you to know how much I appreciate you being here all day, and not just you guys but the number of young people we’ve seen on both sides of this issue today who have stuck it out and -- and are being a part of this conversation. It’s very encouraging, and I thank you for your advocacy.

ISABELLA SEGAL: Thank you.


SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you both so much for your advocacy and your patience in being here today. I’m so grateful for all of your work not only in Hartford but also in Fairfield County specifically and Wilton. I’ve seen the -- the bipartisan and grassroots organizing that you’ve done. I hope -- my question is about the sentiments of your classmates in school. I know when I visited Wilton High School I heard from a lot of students that when they hear a loud noise in the hallway they can’t focus on what they’re supposed to be learning because they’re consumed by the fear of where they would hide and even to the next school shooting. I’m wondering if you could speak at all to how fear of gun violence and our failure to act whether it’s in Hartford of by legislators in Washington has contributed negatively to the learning environment in your high school.
ISABELLA SEGAL: Yes. So, to speak on that, we actually had a part that we had to cut out, but it was about that. You know, every time there’s a fire drill -- the first fire drill after Parkland actually, there’s people screaming, and there was people running, and it was -- it’s a really scary thing to have to go to school, and I know I was -- we were exaggerating when we say this, but when we go to school we don’t know what’s going to happen for the rest of that day, you know, so that definitely has not only lowered the morale of all of the students at the school, but it makes a lot of us not want to come to school at all, and we do have an incredible mental health team and social workers and people who can help us, but you know, there are thousands of students enrolled in high school, and there’s only so many mental help professionals, so I guess, you know, that’s a separate problem. But to summarize, it’s definitely really negatively impacted all of us, and whether you’re a republican or a democrat, it makes us all really scared to come to school, and it’s not like we want to come in and bring our own guns and bring our own firearms. We want to come to school and feel safe, you know. School and home -- those are the places that we’re supposed to feel safe, and we’re able to learn and grow in a healthy and safe environment, and when you don’t feel that safety, it kind of can rock your whole world, so. Do you have anything to add? But yeah.

AVI JARETT: No. You pretty much said it.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you so much for your testimony and for sharing what I believe to be the sentiment of so many young people in our community.
Really grateful that you’re here tonight, and thank you, Mr. Chair.

ISABELLA SEGAL: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions from the committee? Representative Porter.

REP. PORTER (94TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. No questions. I just have to comment. You guys did an awesome job.

ISABELLA SEGAL: Thank you.

AVI JARETT: Thank you.

REP. PORTER (94TH): Just sitting here watching, you have been very patient.

ISABELLA SEGAL: [Laughing].

REP. PORTER (94TH): Just very impressed with the way you’ve been able to deliver the message and make it concrete, right. It’s tangible. I feel what you’re saying, so thank you so much.

AVI JARETT: Thank you.

ISABELLA SEGAL: Thank you. Thank you so much.

REP. PORTER (94TH): You’re welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Representative. Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thanks so much for being with us.

ISABELLA SEGAL: Thank you.

AVI JARETT: Thank you.

HAROLD AYALA: This is my first time, so bear with me and be gentle. [Laughter]. Good evening, committee and fellow citizens. I was born in New York, a state that has so many laws against guns; and yet, growing up I have watched and heard of law-abiding citizens run and hide like sheep from wolves when criminals robbed and invaded homes, so as soon as I got a chance, I got out of New York. I moved to what was and should be a free state -- Connecticut. We all know -- excuse me -- we all here know we have a gun issue, but the issue lies with criminals; yet, we have state representatives trying to impose and implement laws that are only going to affect law-abiding citizens. According to the Washington Post by Jeff Joel, June 12, 2015, when Connecticut put carry permit into effect, homicides went down 40 percent. According to the New York Times, Nick Leghorn, December 28, 2011, New York Times proves conceal carry license holders more abiding than population unintentionally. I believe everyone came here because we all want gun smart and gun safe laws, but all I hear and read are gun restriction laws, which is not only unconstitutional but slowly leading to banning of firearms. Our state reps have limited us with -- us the people to ten-round magazines and put a ban on AR rifles; yet, seem to impose more meaningless laws that breach our 2nd Amendment right, which has no impact on criminals. May I remind everyone that the 2nd Amendment gives the citizens of a free state the
right to bear arms legally and the Amendment is not to be infringed upon.

My heart goes out to all the victims, families, and friends of lost loved ones in these mass shootings that have occurred over the years; however, when my state representatives start making laws based on feelings, that makes me nervous and should make every one else nervous because laws based on feelings are unjust and bias. I am against SB 60. I also am against HB 7218; yet, I own a safe. I am also against HB 7219 and HB 7223. For what I’m seeing and reading, our state representative goals seem to slowly want to eliminate citizens from owning firearms. That’s all I have.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for being with us.

HAROLD AYALA: Sorry. My apologies. I do own a safe, and when I talk about that 7218, basically, when I do put my firearms away in the safe, I just basically take the magazines out of the firearms, but I store them in the shelf --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

HAROLD AYALA: Which is right above.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

HAROLD AYALA: ‘Cause it makes it easier for my wife to get it because she has carpal tunnel. God forbid something happens.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Thank you. Next up is Heather Dean, followed by Peter Cianelli. Heather Dean? Heather Dean? No answer. Peter Cianelli?
PETER CIANELLI: Yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, then we’ll hear from Madison Knoop after that.

PETER CIANELLI: Distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I’d like to first thank you for allowing me to give this -- submit this testimony today. My name is Peter Cianelli. I reside in East Haven Connecticut, and I have lived in East Haven, Connecticut my whole life. My mother who is 100 years old has lived there her whole life. My children -- all three of them -- their spouses, my grandchildren are all lifelong residents. My wife’s grandparents in the 1800s were lifelong residents along with her family. I oppose SB 60 -- an act that targets law-abiding gun owners. This bill allows a police officer to stop and frisk legal gun owners without reasonable suspicion of a crime being committed. I oppose HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF A FIREARM IN A HOME. I have owned guns for over 50 years, and I have always made sure my weapons were always securely -- secured properly. The government has no business to legislate in my home on what I should or should not do. It’s wrong for a law such of this to impose a requirement that makes my firearm unavailable for a defensive situation.

I oppose HB 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF A PISTOL OR A REVOLVER IN A MOTOR VEHICLE. This law would only require that I purchase lockboxes for each and every pistol I bring to the range. How would this law make a person safer? If someone wants to break into my vehicle or steal the vehicle, the weapon should be take -- they’re gonna be taken without or without the lockboxes.
Now, I support HB No. 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES. I support this bill that will give every resident equal 2nd Amendment protection no matter where they live in our state of Connecticut. I support HB 5870, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES. I am in full support of this bill because that will correct the mistakes of the original assault bill -- weapons bill and high magazines. This will allow the transfer of trades among those legal gun owners of the banned assault rifles and large capacity magazines. I support SB No. 940, AN ACT THAT WOULD ALLOW PISTOL PERMIT HOLDERS TO CARRY A HANDGUN FOR SELF DEFENSE IN STATE PARKS.

Members of this committee, many of the gun control bills that were enacted after the tragedy of Sandy Hook did little or nothing in protecting the residents of our state. Many of the bills targeted of the law-abiding gun owners and not the criminals, mentally ill, or irresponsible individuals who account from nearly all the gun-related crimes. The legal responsible gun owners in Connecticut have firmly established over and over again that we aren’t the problem you seek the legislate. Legislate the criminals, the mentally ill, not us. You will make me a felon [Bell] because I will not comply by some of these rules. I’m 70 years old. I have every award there is. I’ve been in the state of Connecticut throughout my life. Don’t do this to me or my family. We’ve had it. Thanks.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much for testifying. Questions from the committee?
PETER CIANELLI: I’d be more than happy to answer any questions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I’m seeing none.

PETER CIANELLI: Mr. Blumenthal? No? [Laughter].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I’m seeing none. Sir.

PETER CIANELLI: Thank you very much, guys.


MADISON KNOOP: Members of the joint committee on Judiciary, my name is Madison Knoop. I am from Redding, and I am 19 years old. I am a part of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I am testifying in support of HB 7218 and HB 7223. I am one of the many Americans living with mental illness, and I am one of also the many who have been hospitalized in fear that they might take their life. Along my various journeys, I have heard people say how grateful they are that they cannot purchase a gun. I have heard people say that they would be dead if they had access to a gun. Suicide is the third leading cause of death between the ages 10 and 24. My friends are dying; our kids are dying. Nearly half of all suicides in the U.S. are gun deaths. About 85 to 91 percent of suicides -- gun suicides are fatal when only 3 percent of non-gun suicides are. Passing these bills will make it even more difficult for someone to die by gun suicide. These bills will save lives. I am sick and tired of seeing my friends die. Gun suicide is one of the most overlooked parts of gun violence, so we must do what we can to keep preventing it. Members of the Judiciary Committee, I urge you to pass HB 7218 and HB 7223 out of the committee. Thank you.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Representative Stafstrom, Ranking Members Rebimbas, and distinguished members of the -

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Microphone.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Oh, I turned it off. Sorry. Representative Stafstrom, Ranking Member Rebimbas, and distinguished members of the Judiciary, my name is Jonathan Perloe. I’m a resident of Greenwich, employed by Connecticut Against Gun Violence as it’s communication director. I’m here to testify in support of HB 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS. Connecticut regulates firearms because doing so saves lives. In particular, background checks help keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people and by federal law, firearms must carry serial numbers so that guns can be traced -- a critical tool for solving crimes. A key component of any firearm is the receiver. Under federal law, only the receiver must carry a serial number. Aside from a fully assembled firearm, it is the only component that is independently considered a firearm and subject to regulation including a background check. However, by selling unfinished receivers in a kit that can be assembled at home, companies have found a loophole to avoid gun regulations. An unfinished receiver without some holes, slots, and cavities is not considered a firearm. It’s just a piece of unregulated metal. Because these self-assembled guns and 3D printed guns don’t carry serial numbers,
they’re known as ghost guns. There’s no rationale for not regulating ghost guns the same as we do other firearms. The intent of 7219 is to regulate these do-it-yourself guns the same as firearms bought at a gun dealer. We can’t let prohibited individuals evade background checks by making guns at home, and we can’t let untraceable guns flow into the black market to end up in the hands of criminals. Opponents of last year’s bill claim that the law would turn individuals into felons for just owning a block of metal. I don’t believe that’s true. The bill language specifically talks about a component designed and intended to be used in the assembly of a functional firearm. No one is going to jail for using a block of metal as a paperweight. The threat of ghost guns to public safety, however, is very real.

They’ve been used in mass shootings and attacks on law enforcement and have been seized in criminal investigations including in Connecticut. My written testimony documents some of these cases. Ghost guns are as lethal as manufactured firearms. Ghostguns.com advertises that its AR-15 unfinished lower receiver would give you an unregistered weapon system that’s ready for almost any combat scenario. Contrary to the charts that gun laws don’t work, the head of Los Angeles ATF said criminals are making their own weapons because they’re not able to buy them legally. Now, ghost guns are turning up in Connecticut, and neighboring states. Last November, a Willimantic teen was arrested for selling ghost guns, telling an undercover agent that demand was so high he couldn’t keep up. Last year, Bridgeport confiscated -- the police confiscated seven ghost guns. In January of this year, a Southington man
was convicted in connection with selling a ghost gun online. Just last month, about 50 miles from Danbury, a New York man was arrested for allegedly assembling dozens of guns at his home and selling them to convicted criminals.

Connecticut needs to respond to this very real threat to public safety by treating firearms made at home the same as we do those bought from gun dealers. That’s why I urge you to vote yes on HB 7219, and I thank you very much for your time and consideration, and staying so late tonight.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. You say that the lower receiver is the part of the gun that is required to have a serial number; is that right?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Where is the lower receiver on a pistol?

JONATHAN PERLOE: The lower receiver is the part of the body of the gun that other pieces are attached around.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Are you aware that a pistol has no lower receiver?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I am not an expert on gun design, and yet, I think I speak for many others that believe that ghost guns should be regulated the same as other firearms, and I also believe that the legislature in front of us and working with LCO can figure out how to draft language that achieves the objective of the bill, which is to keep the public
safe and to regulate these ghost guns, untraceable ghost guns the same way as we regulate other guns in particularly requiring a background check before it’s purchased and making it traceable by having a serial number.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, are you aware that lower receivers do not have to have a serial number even under federal law?

JONATHAN PERLOE: That’s not my understanding, but.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, in -- in some firearms, other parts are the serialized part. Okay. So, if you require a lower receiver to have a serial number and you already have a serial number on a different part, then you’ve got a firearm with two different serial numbers on it; wouldn’t you?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Not necessarily different serial numbers but two serial numbers based on what you said.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, I understand that you want to ban what you call ghost guns. There’s nothing -- there’s nothing in law even in this statute that defines the word ghost gun. That’s sort of a euphemism for some -- for a gun without a serial number; isn’t it?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

JONATHAN PERLOE: So [inaudible -09:52:28] loose term that is.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, under statute, we don’t ban euphemisms. We have specific language
that bans specific things, so the devil is in the
details; right?

JONATHAN PERLOE:  I agree. Under this statute,
would you agree that at any phase of manufacture a --
whether it’s a 0 percent, a 50 percent, 80 percent, or 100 percent -- what you’re calling a
lower receiver is considered a ghost gun?

JONATHAN PERLOE:  A ghost gun is a part that can be
turned into a fully functional firearm that does not
carry a serial number. That’s my understanding.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Okay. So, any part -- so a
single part that can be turned into a firearm?

JONATHAN PERLOE:  The receiver or frame as it’s
declared in federal law, but an unfinished one. And,
again, as I said, I’m -- I’m not a lawyer, I’m not a
legislator. I -- I don’t want to sort of, you know,
engage in a discussion over the -- the specifics of
the bill because I defer to you to say -- to come up
with language that meets the intent that we have.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Okay.

JONATHAN PERLOE:  And, I think with the LCO and
other members of the committee, I’m sure you can
figure out language that does not have unintended
consequences but serves the public safety interest.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH):  Okay. So, you’re -- so
you’re not as concerned about what the actual words
of the statute are of the bill. You’re more
concerned about banning the -- the concept, the
euphemism of ghost guns?

JONATHAN PERLOE:  I wouldn’t call it a euphemism.
It is a term that is being commonly used by law
enforcement in the in the press and media, so it’s
not -- you know, people have a common understanding of what it’s -- what it’s talking about.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

JONATHAN PERLOE: My concern is that people cannot buy things that are intended to be turned into firearms without a serial number and without background check. That’s my concern.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. But can’t anything be turned into a firearm?

JONATHAN PERLOE: As I said, I’m sure -- you’re an attorney, I believe, and there’s other attorneys on this panel, and there is the LCO, which is cast with coming up with legislative language that passes Constitutional muster and meets the specific intention of the bill, and that’s your responsibility, not mine, and so I’m sure you can come up with some solution that achieves the public safety interest, that doesn’t get into the problems that --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I agree.

JONATHAN PERLOE: I don’t want just a piece of metal that somebody can buy to be, you know, require a background check if they’re not intending to turn it into a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, that’s -- that’s what I’m trying to ask. I’m not trying to ask you about the specific language because you have indicated that you’re not completely familiar with it, and you’re not an attorney, so you wouldn’t know how the -- how the language should work.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Right.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, I’m trying to investigate your understanding of what you are trying to ban. Okay. So -- so, I’m asking you specifically --

JONATHAN PERLOE: Yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): If you want to ban ghost guns, which again I believe is a euphemism, you think it’s a commonly used term that’s -- that most people understand. If most people understand it, give me a definition of the thing that you want to ban.

JONATHAN PERLOE: What I would like to ban is the weapon that somebody in California used. He was prohibited from buying -- legally buying firearms, but he was able to manufacture his own assault-style rifle, and went out to kill four people. I’m talking about the gun that somebody -- that an 18-year-old outside of Philadelphia talked to his friends about bringing to his school to shoot up at the school that he made at home. I’m talking about a gun that was also handmade or homemade, made at home that was used to shoot at four police officers in Buffalo -- I’m sorry -- in Baltimore. I’m talking about --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Would you -- would you -- would you -- now, I understand you want to ban a gun that somebody used in a crime. Understand that. You want to -- but -- and -- and it doesn’t have a serial number. So, is that what you’re trying to ban? All guns without serial numbers?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I want people who want to make their own gun at home to go through the same regulatory procedures that somebody who buys the gun
at a gun store goes through -- a licensed gun dealer.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, let’s say that I want to make a gun as you say. I’ve got a block of aluminum. How do I do that?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I don’t know how you do that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Do I take the block of aluminum to the gun store or do I have to buy the block of aluminum at the gun store?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I’m not here to testify about how you can make a firearm at home. I’m sorry. I’m not. I don’t have that expertise, and I don’t pretend to.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, do you understand that -- that the devil is in the details, and the details are very complex given the -- the complexity of manufacturing a thing that has many, many parts, some of which are regulated under federal law, some of which are not?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

JONATHAN PERLOE: I think I’ve answered that question before.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And --

JONATHAN PERLOE: I disagree, the devil is in the details, and as I’ve explained before, I think I have left it up to you folks who we elect to pass laws to keep us safe, among other things, and the legislative commissioner’s office that is tasked with coming up with constitutionally, you know valid
legislation and laws that don’t have unintended consequences, and I leave it to you to do your job.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Would -- would you be happy if the law said that nobody can make a firearm without a serial number?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I would -- that would be one thing that would please me, yes, and I think help keep me safer. Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Would that -- would that in your mind be the banning of ghost guns?

JONATHAN PERLOE: No. Well, I guess yes if you can -- if you can make in any way shape or form a functional firearm without a serial number, then they would not be ghost guns because that is the common understanding of a ghost gun. It’s a ghost gun because it’s untraceable. It’s untraceable because it has no serial number, but that’s not the only thing we’re asking for. We’re also asking that anybody who buys this piece that has been defined in the legislation -- and I will leave it to you to define it -- that they go through a background check the same way they do if they go to buy a fully functional firearm at a licensed firearm dealer.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Are you -- are you familiar with -- do you know what a security exemplar is?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I do not.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Do you -- are you familiar with the portion of this bill that talks about imbedding a piece of metal into a polymer frame?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I have read that part. Yes.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Do you know where that comes from?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Where what comes from? The language?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yes.

JONATHAN PERLOE: I -- I don’t -- no. I don’t know where it comes from. It came from the people who drafted the legislation. I think -- well, that’s all I know. I do not know where it comes from other than people on this committee wrote some legislation, and I read it, and I understand the purpose of it, but I don’t know where it came from.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. You understand the purpose of it. Do you -- do you know why 3.7 ounces of type 17-4 PH stainless steel was chosen?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I don’t know why those specific specs were chosen. My understanding is it was chosen so that a 3D printed plastic gun can be detectable by security scanning systems, so you can’t walk on a plane with a 3D printed plastic gun and do whatever you might do, or walk into this building, which has security scanning equipment to keep you safe and me safe.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, you are correct that you are not familiar with this, but -- ‘cause your answer was not correct [Laughter], but it was a good shot. I -- I would have probably said the same thing if I didn’t look it up.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Okay.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But thank you very much for your testimony, and thank you, Mr. Chairman. No further questions.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Mr. Perloe, you didn’t draft this bill; did you?

JONATHAN PERLOE: No. I did not.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. You were here last year when we had a public hearing on this bill; correct?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I actually wasn’t here in person, but I certainly was involved in the advocacy for last year’s ghost gun bill.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. And, the bill before us this year is slightly different than the bill that we heard for public hearing last year; is that correct?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Slightly different. I’m not sure the exact nuances.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right. There’s -- there’s some language nuances and other things that were added through the committee process last year that are present in the bill we’re hearing for public hearing this year; correct?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I will take your word for that, and that’s sort of my meaning of you guys work to come up with language that achieves the intent of the bill.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right. And, the intent of the bill is that if you want to own a firearm in the state of Connecticut, you should abide by our existing laws, which is you have to pass a background check, and the gun has to have a serial number on it; correct?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Exactly.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. And, you’re not particularly concerned of what language is actually used in order to achieve that intent; are you?

JONATHAN PERLOE: That is exactly right. I’m concerned with the outcome, not the language of the law that achieves it as long as it achieves the outcome.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, that was the outcome you and CAGV sought to achieve at last year’s public hearing; correct?

JONATHAN PERLOE: That is correct.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, you were open to changes during the public hearing process that ultimately made it into the bill that was JFS’d out of this committee last year?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Yes. I mean not specifically, but with the process in general, yes. I mean I didn’t follow the details of the changes, but that process seems to serve us well.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Thank you.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Thank you.


REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, sir.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Thank you.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Present -- under the present law as you understand it, if somebody has already done a background check, and let’s say they have
what’s known as an eligibility certificate; are you aware of eligibility certificate?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Yes. I am.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. In order to get an eligibility certificate, you have to pay a fee to the state, get fingerprints done, take a safety course, and be a nonprohibited person?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Is that fair? Okay. So, what would be wrong with somebody who has an eligibility certificate being able to manufacture their firearm in their garage or basement? What would be the problem with that?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Well, one problem is it -- if it does not have a serial number, it is not traceable.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, -- okay, so how would that tracing work? Where is the -- where is the concern at the point of manufacture for personal consumption? It’s not talking about the person selling it. I’m just trying to -- [Crosstalk].

JONATHAN PERLOE: That person may turn around, and -- well, you said he’s not gonna sell it, so I will assume that that’s true.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): That’s not a part of this scenario.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Right. So, perhaps that person decides to commit a crime with that gun, and the gun is recovered at a crime scene. I would like law enforcement to be able to trace that back to the original purchaser, and a serial number helps to do
that. A gun without a serial number makes it much more difficult.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so a law-abiding individual who has passed all the background checks, you would prevent them from manufacturing their own firearm in their -- their own home?

JONATHAN PERLOE: That’s not what I said, and that’s not what this bill says?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, I’m just trying to whittle down to -- to where you are at because in your exchange with the good chairman, I -- I thought that that’s what you said that that’s what you are looking for -- is for people to go through the system, okay, and if I’ve done -- if I have an eligibility certificate, there’s been a background check; right? And, I’m just trying to figure out what else you’re looking for here for public safety? The issuance of a serial number really does nothing from my perspective at that point -- at the manufacture point, so can you just explain to me how that’s different?

JONATHAN PERLOE: Well, I think the ATF would differ on -- on your feeling that the serial number has no value being affixed to the gun during -- at the point of manufacture, and that’s my understanding that has great value, and I believe my certainly found evidence that suggested that law enforcement finds having serial numbers a critical piece of investigating crimes that have been committed with guns.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, you’re relying upon someone else -- your interpretation of what
they’ve had to say. You have no personal opinion on the --

JONATHAN PERLOE: Well, that’s my personal opinion having read it, and it seems like a very logical argument that it makes it possible to trace the firearm if it has the serial number, and it is impossible or possibly much less possible to trace it if it does not have a serial number.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Are you familiar with the markings, land and grooves on bullets and that kind of stuff?

JONATHAN PERLOE: When it leaves the chamber, and --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yes. Where crime is committed, somebody’s shot.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): There’s gonna be a projectile that leaves the gun. It’s gonna have some sort of identifying characteristics on it. Does that -- [Crosstalk].

JONATHAN PERLOE: That’s my understanding. That’s accurate.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, it’s fair to say that many times when a firearm is found at a scene that they’re able to match it up based upon -- without a serial number -- based upon the projectile shooting it, doing some sort of testing.

JONATHAN PERLOE: So, that matches the -- the ammunition or bullet with the gun. It does not tell
you who owns the gun or who once purchased the gun, which might be quite helpful in figuring out who committed the crime. You can’t do that by just matching the bullet to the gun.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Now, you mentioned that this bill would prevent, and I -- I wrote down -- I tried to take it down verbatim, “the criminals are making their own weapons because they cannot buy the gun legally.” So, you -- is that fair? Is that what you said?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I did not say that. The head of the Los Angeles ATF said that.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

JONATHAN PERLOE: And, I -- I believe he was a credible source for a statement of that point.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, when -- when that individual says criminals, that would be a person who is prohibited from owning a firearm; correct?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I think there are -- well, I would agree with you with that, yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, how would this law fix that? Criminals are still criminals --

JONATHAN PERLOE: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, criminals are still gonna build guns; right?

JONATHAN PERLOE: So, one example would be the 18-year-old in Willimantic I think I said who was buying presumably, and I -- I won’t swear to this, but presumably had bought these guns from, you know, ghostgun.com, some type of online seller of unfinished receivers. He finished them at home, and
he tried to sell them to other people. Yes, he is a criminal by definition, but he didn’t have to go through a background check, and the guns he sold did not have serial numbers.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): But the -- the action that the 18-year-old was allegedly was -- was it handguns or long guns; do you know?

JONATHAN PERLOE: I think it may have been both, but I’m not positive.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, possession of a handgun, 21 years old, I think is what you said.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Well -- sorry, go ahead.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): The action by that individual as you’ve told it is -- is already presently illegal.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Correct, but --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Correct.

JONATHAN PERLOE: I think our concern here is -- so there are multiple layers of laws that keep us safe, and part of the intention of this is to sort of choke off the supply -- the supply, so I’m going to assume that ghostguns.com, which currently appears to be following the law. I don’t have any evidence that they’re not -- when they find out that they have to run a background check or get a permit number from a resident in Connecticut to buy the firearm will change its selling practices so that 18-year-old in Willimantic would not have been able to buy those -- that kit from them online.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, the intent with regard to that would be to prevent an out-of-state commercial
business that’s lawfully selling a product from selling it to someone in Connecticut?

JONATHAN PERLOE: So, first of all, it doesn’t matter to me whether they are in state or out of state, and it’s not to prevent them from selling it. It’s to prevent them to selling it to a prohibited person.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, the 18-year-old receiving through some process the 80 percent firearm -- you can’t shoot a projectile out of it -- so, I understand where you’re going. I just -- you know the Danbury thing also I think -- and that was not a --

JONATHAN PERLOE: No. It wasn’t in Dan -- it was 50 miles from Danbury. I was just suggesting that it was near to Connecticut. It was in New York State. Oh, well, you specifically mentioned Danbury, but --

JONATHAN PERLOE: I said it was just 50 miles from Danbury over the border in New York State.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

JONATHAN PERLOE: If I wasn’t clear about that, I apologize.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, what was going on there?

JONATHAN PERLOE: An individual had been manufacturing quite a few firearms at home, and was selling them to the -- report that I read -- was outlaw motorcycle gangs and convicted criminals.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, that -- that activity under federal law whether it be in Connecticut or New York is already illegal?
JONATHAN PERLOE: But not the purchasing of the kits that they use to make the guns at home.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

JONATHAN PERLOE: That is not illegal.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, if he didn’t use kits and -- there’s been testimony earlier today that you can go to Home Depot, and -- and get the products to, you know, and certainly we have pieces of metal that one can mill for personal consumption. It’s the transfer that we’re concerned about to outlaw motorcycle gangs.

JONATHAN PERLOE: That’s one of the concerns. I’m also concerned that the person such as the man in California -- in fact, there had been two incidents in California, that person was a prohibited person, bought the gun for his own personal use to kill people, and he did kill people. So, it’s not just about selling it to criminals. It’s about people with either a criminal intent at the time or maybe it comes later. I don’t know. But there clearly are cases -- two that I mentioned in California -- of people who were prohibited from buying firearms by federal law, but were able to buy these kits, manufacture the guns at home, and go out and kill people, and I don’t want that to happen in Connecticut.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

JONATHAN PERLOE: Thank you very much.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for being with us.
JONATHAN PERLOE: Thank you so much for your time.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up we’re gonna hear from Brendan Malone. Brendan Malone?

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [Off mic] I don’t see him.


SCOTT WILSON: Hi. Good evening, honorable co-chairs and ranking members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Scott Wilson, President of the Connecticut Citizens’ Defense League. We’re a grassroot 2nd Amendment organization founded just over ten years ago. And, for the record, I oppose and/or support the following bills today on today’s agenda: Senate Bill 60, I oppose. House Bill 7218, oppose. 7219, oppose. 7223, oppose, and we support SB 940, HB 5227, and HB 5870. And, you have my written testimony. I just want to say that today has been an interesting day to see some of the decorum or lack thereof that -- that’s going on during the course of today’s events. It was -- you know, we’ve had somebody that texted what could be perceived as, you know, a threat against a state legislator here, and against others who are members of the National Rifle Association. We’ve had people circumvent rules as far as bringing in partially completed firearms or not completed firearms or a hunk of metal that could be manufactured into a firearm depending on what the mood of the moment is, so I just want to say it’s a privilege to be here and testify before the committee. I want to say that, you know, right now we’ve tried to come to terms. As you all know, we spoke outside, Chairperson Stafstrom, with regarding the safe storage act. We
have presented a bill to Sean Scanlon -- Representative Scanlon, and as of now, that language that we had recommended never made it into what’s before the Judiciary Committee today. I would like to see education implemented in schools. It had already passed back in 1990 under the Public Act 90-144. You know, we are -- are sick over what happened to the Song’s child, and I’m -- it’s not falling on deaf ears, and as I testified to this committee before in the past and I believe the Public Safety Committee, you could have a law today called Scott’s Law just about because back in 1979 a friend of a relative brought a gun over, and I was shot with that gun. The bullet hit the artery in my neck and lodged against my spine, so I nearly lost my life too, and I can understand and empathize with -- with, you know, the family’s grief. So, that’s it. You’ve got my written testimony, and if anybody has any questions, feel free to ask.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Mr. Wilson, and I just, you know, I want you to know on the decorum piece obviously there were several issues this morning. The committee leadership met and dealt with those. I’d like to contain, you know, the remainder of this hearing to the testimony and the bills before us and the questioning of bills before us and the language before us. There were several decorum issues including outbursts this morning and the like --

SCOTT WILSON: Yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I’m -- I’m glad that everybody has calmed down as the day has gone on, and I appreciate the fact that we can get back to talking about the language of the bills.
SCOTT WILSON:  Sure.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):  So, on the safe storage bills, safe storage in the home, the 7218. So, there’s a couple pieces to that bill and -- and I understand you’d like to see some additional language in that bill, but I want to understand what you -- what language in that bill you agree with and what language you may not agree with, so on that bill, do you agree that the age at which the safe storage law kicks in should be raised from the age of 16 to 18?

SCOTT WILSON:  That’s the component that we discussed as an active committee, and we looked at that language, and we said, that’s okay provided --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):  Okay.

SCOTT WILSON:  We get the education on that.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):  So -- so, you can live with that piece?

SCOTT WILSON:  Sure.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):  How about the piece about that an unloaded gun would need to be held in a safe the same way as a loaded gun would; you can live with that language?

SCOTT WILSON:  Well, we do believe it should be a loaded firearm, not necessarily an unloaded firearm; however, if the language of the bill comes out with the education, what we intend to do is go back as a committee and discuss whether or not we could support and live with that language. Right now, we don’t see that.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, that’s not how a negotiation works.

SCOTT WILSON: Well, I mean --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Do you agree or do you not agree?

SCOTT WILSON: Right now, I would say that we need to discuss it as a committee if the education language -- the language of the education gets put in there.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

SCOTT WILSON: Then we go back and reassess. Right now -- I’m sorry.


SCOTT WILSON: Right now, you know, we agreed with the 16 to 18. We have no problem with that. We have -- we would prefer manner as opposed to location, and you know, beyond that, I do think that -- wow. Okay. I do think that you know turning this from a may type of -- of public act that was passed back in 1990, I do believe that it should be a shall, so you and I discussed out -- out in the lobby that you know you are concerned about it bouncing from one committee to another committee. I’m here to say that if we’re gonna enact some legislation, let’s make it meaningful, and let’s do it the right way.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, I’ll talk about the education piece in one second, but I want to follow on the safe storage piece for a second. So, you’re okay with a gun in a -- so you’re -- the current stated law that a loaded firearm needs to be kept in
a safe where there is someone under the age of 16. Well, let’s actually do this ‘cause you’re okay with that number going to 18, so you --

SCOTT WILSON: Well, that’s not entirely true either because it is discretionary to a point where if a 16 -- if a parent feels that the 16-year-old is okay or a 15-year-old is okay with the firearm, any components of the law don’t trigger -- don’t kick in -- better word -- until something -- if somebody is harmed or killed as a result of that. Do you see what I’m saying, so it’s not -- I do believe that --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right, and we heard testimony that this is a -- this is a reactive law. It’s a secondary violation.

SCOTT WILSON: Right.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Nobody’s -- we can all agree that even if this law goes into place, there’s not going to be a S.W.A.T. team that goes around and checks every gun owners house to see whether they’re locking their guns up; correct?

SCOTT WILSON: Correct.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): ‘Cause that’s not the law now.

SCOTT WILSON: Right.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, that wouldn’t change under the proposed bill.

SCOTT WILSON: Understood.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, if you’re okay with it being a secondary violation that someone has to retain a loaded firearm with someone under a certain age in a home, are you okay with that same
requirement for a loaded firearm left unattended in a vehicle to have to be safety stored in a safe?

SCOTT WILSON: I do think that people need to be responsible with their guns wherever they are, and if it’s -- well, the problem with that with the motor vehicle is that we don’t really have a clear definition of what a safe is.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): You don’t know what a safe is?

SCOTT WILSON: No. I know what a safe is, but what is a safe by definition as far as safety stored in a motor vehicle? Are we talking mounting a safe into the -- into the well of the automobile to where it’s immovable? Are we talking about just a basic trigger lock that goes through the trigger lock and around the -- the -- the frame of the seat?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Are you -- I think the language right now just says it needs to be kept in a safe; correct? It doesn’t say it has to be mounted.

SCOTT WILSON: Sure.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. I mean yeah if folks would advocate and say the safe had to be mounted, I guess we could craft the bill that way, but that’s not what the bill --

SCOTT WILSON: Right.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Just says it has to be left in a safe.

SCOTT WILSON: Okay, so does a glovebox count as a safe?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): No.
SCOTT WILSON: With a -- with a key?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): No. It’s not a safe. It’s a glovebox.

SCOTT WILSON: Okay.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): All right. I mean -- I don’t -- I mean you’ve been around this building for quite some time, have you ever encountered Connecticut General Statute 1-2z?

SCOTT WILSON: I’m not familiar off the top of my head with it, no.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): It’s the plain meaning rule of it’s -- it’s actually in the statute, and it specifically requires that statutes be given their plain meaning, and unless they would yield absurd results, you shouldn’t basically read more into the language than what is actually written in the language.

SCOTT WILSON: Okay.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, I think when we use the term safe, something like the term safe that has the plain meaning in English parlance, doesn’t need to be defined in statute because most Americans know what a safe is.

SCOTT WILSON: Sure.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. All right. On the education piece specifically, can I ask has -- have you or anybody from your organization to your knowledge reached out to the Department of Education and asked why they’ve not promulgated a curriculum within the last 30 or so years?
SCOTT WILSON: Yeah, I know -- I know our legislative coordinator who will be up here later did do -- did on our behalf a foyer request to find out what happened beyond when the statute passed, and essentially, I don’t think any of the people there really know what’s going on, so it essentially dead-ended right there, so.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, what about over the last 30 years? I mean we’ve had republican governors during that time -- probably more republican than democratic governors. We’ve had many different education commissioners. Has anybody wrote to the Department of Ed, or has anybody called them up and said, hey, there’s this law in the books that you may promulgate this. Can you please get around to doing that?

SCOTT WILSON: To my knowledge as far as anybody in our organization --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right.

SCOTT WILSON: No. Because we’re -- we are now just sort of starting to be enlightened with some of this, but I can tell you that when the information came back that the act had passed in 1990, and that nothing was done about it, and it just simply dead-ended between the Police Chiefs Association and the State Board of Education, you know, it’s a little troublesome to, you know, even to somebody like me who also had a shooting accident as a kid, and have seen the news reports. You know, we saw the National Shooting Sports Foundation testify earlier that -- that right now accidental shootings are at the -- the lowest they have been in probably forever, but you would never know that based on the, you know, nonstop news media coverage.
REP. STAFTROM (129TH): I understand. My -- my question was sort of a simple one, is -- is there a way other than changing state statute to address the concern you have, which is the Department of Education already has the authority to promulgate a curriculum, maybe you know just over the last 30 years nobody has brought it to their attention, so they haven’t done it, and the current commissioner and the current Board of Education may be willing to do that.

SCOTT WILSON: You know, that’s something that we would probably explore --

REP. STAFTROM (129TH): Okay.

SCOTT WILSON: If the -- if the language that we’re seeking to have put in there right now does not make it into the -- into this bill during Judiciary.


REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Mr. Wilson. You testified earlier on -- in support of HB 5227.

SCOTT WILSON: Yes. That’s correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, in your doings with the CCDL, have -- has there been problems indicated or brought to your attention with different municipalities and having their own rules let’s say with pistol permits and that kind of stuff?

SCOTT WILSON: Well, pistol permits is certainly one of those issues as far as the issuing process, but we also see you know what happened in Southbury just over probably about a year and four months ago where they tried to, you know, pass a whole bunch of bans
on -- on town property and town events and things of that nature. There’s been a number of these issues going on. There’s still some issues down in I think Madison right now or Branford where they’re trying to institute some language down there in the municipal code, but yes, as far as you know the pistol permit process, we did a -- we had filed a declaratory petition years ago with the state -- the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners, and we found that a lot of towns were putting in all different kinds of things in addition to the state pistol permit process where they wanted to count the teeth in your mouth, they wanted background checks, they wanted notary, they want the main cover sheet of what they hand you notarized on top of other things being notarized, which the board came back with their ruling and said that nothing beyond what’s required by state statute is necessary to -- to have a pistol permit issued in the state of Connecticut. We see cities like New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, Waterbury, to some extent Middletown, although I’ve met with the police chief there, and they have improved somewhat on their issuing, but it’s still not within the statutory timeframe. You know, this is a right delayed is a right denied, and we are seeing people constantly living in certain locations being denied their due process to have a pistol permit issues.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I’m sure you’re being fictitious with the number of teeth in their mouth, but --

SCOTT WILSON: No. I’m not.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Really?
SCOTT WILSON: Yes. How many -- yes. Are you missing any teeth? That was in -- I don’t know if Jonathan’s here, but I believe it might have been Waterbury asking that.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, in your experience, what happens when the municipalities -- you don’t comply with their local rule with regard to pistol permit process?

SCOTT WILSON: They are not going to issue you the permit.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, so that’s a denial.

SCOTT WILSON: That’s a constructive denial. Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Was it a constructive denial? ‘Cause constructive denial is --

SCOTT WILSON: Well, constructive denial -- right. Just when they --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): There’s no response.

SCOTT WILSON: Right.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah, so that’s a straight denial.

SCOTT WILSON: Sure.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, then if you have -- if you still want your pistol permit, what do you do then?

SCOTT WILSON: You have to appeal to the Board of Firearms Permit Examiners, and --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, that takes about two and a half years I think --
SCOTT WILSON: That is correct. Yes. A law-abiding citizen in the state of Connecticut that you know has paid for the background checks, has paid -- has done everything by the letter of the law, you know is -- is subject to a two and a half year -- up to a two and a half year wait or more depending on how many different cases they have at any given time. You know, and the comparison was made last year with Kevin Kane that you know he compared the town of Goshen to the town of Bridgeport purely for the -- the profiling bill I’ll call it. He compared those two, and in towns like Goshen, it’s relatively easier to get a pistol permit than it is in a town like Hartford or in a town like Bridgeport. You know, so I just have to wonder what the -- what the thinking is in those towns and in those cities where they don’t trust their own citizens who apply for a permit, and they make them wait and wait and wait, and often times, people move during that timeframe, so if they do move, they can’t just move the permit over to whatever town they move to, so if they have a two-year wait, they have to go apply again for the pistol permit.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, these are people that are lawfully trying to follow the system that is taking them years in some cases, especially in the cities to -- to exercise their right?

SCOTT WILSON: That’s correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. How many members in your organization?

SCOTT WILSON: Thirty-one-thousand and up.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Are you -- are you able to speak about the -- about what your members would go through if there were 169 different -- different sets of firearms laws, or is there somebody else from your organization who will be coming up later who would be better able to -- [Crosstalk].

SCOTT WILSON: I’m sure people may be able to augment what I want to say, but I mean I will -- I can state definitively that we -- and I know the term law-abiding citizen has been you know sort of you know a -- a rhetorical kind of statement made here often, and repeatedly year after year, but we go through local background checks. We go through state background checks. We go through the federal background checks. We do everything we can. We pay hefty money for our pistol permits, the training, all the things that go along with being a legal law-abiding gun owner in the state of Connecticut, and if you’re gonna drive from one town and pass an imaginary line that you can’t see, and you’re -- one minute you’re in a town like you know Wolcott, and the next minute you’re in a town like Woodbridge where they actually have language that says that you really can’t drive on a town road in -- in Woodbridge. What are you going to do? You do your best to follow the laws. Years ago, we had ordinances in New London and New Britain that banned concealed carry of weapons in general, just a general term for banning weapons, so there was --
there was some hoopla about people saying, well, just open carry in those towns, and a lot of people were -- were stating that they didn’t want to open carry in those towns, so we appealed to the senses of it was -- they were both very old ordinances, and we appealed to New London, which is the town I live in, and then we appealed to New Britain, which is a town another executive member at the time of our organization lived in, and they did the right thing, and they changed those ordinances, but that’s not the same case in every town. You know, we often meet resistance, and I -- and I really do think that there are unfortunately some politicians that do use gun control and gun restrictions, and all the difficulties that go with that as sort of a platform you know to -- to make a name for themselves or to you know make their mark politically.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, one of my concerns --

SCOTT WILSON: And -- and, can I just say -- and there are other legislators who may sway one way or the other on any given day who you know could be swayed by an argument and who really do sit on the fence, and they just -- they want people safer, so let me say that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, I thank you for that answer, but one of my concerns is that the combination of having 169 different sets of regulation along with the possibility that a police officer in any one of these municipalities could now detain somebody simply by seeing a firearm, that the combination of that would make the firearms laws in the state so onerous that nobody would even understand them wherever they went, and that they
could be -- they could be detained, their firearm could be ceased, their permit could be ceased because they -- they happen to be driving down a road that went through two, three, four, twelve different towns without any indication that the means of carry was changing from one traffic light to the next.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah, and -- and even if ultimately whoever -- a judge -- decides to just say this is not worth it, you know, they’ve got a permit, a person may not beat the right. Okay. They’re gonna -- they’re gonna probably have issues with the police, and they could be taken into custody and detained. They could face all kinds of -- if there’s a criminal charge attached with it, they could face all kind of humiliation merely simply because they have a permit to carry, and they are trying to follow the law. I mean I would hope that the legislative body here would understand that you know we are doing our best to follow the laws and written, and and as best as we have interpreted because sometimes there are a lot of gray areas. I would certainly hope that given that that there is an understanding that we really don’t want to end up becoming a criminal as a result of any of this stuff, so I think this -- if anything here today, whether you’re -- you’re opposed to ghost guns or not or if -- whether or not you agree with safe storage to whatever capacity the language says right now, this is something that actually would be fair to those who have a permit to carry a firearm issued by the state of Connecticut, not by the town of Bridgeport or the town of New London or the town of Wolcott or Goshen or anywhere. This would be a very fair measure, I think.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions? Vice-Chairman Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Sir, thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, I just want to clarify a couple of things. It sounded like before when you were testifying on HB 7218, the safe storage in the home that your primary issue with that was -- or so your issue with that was you thought education should be implemented as well?

SCOTT WILSON: I do.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): But you don’t -- you don’t have any opposition to the bill otherwise?

SCOTT WILSON: Well, the -- the language we presented -- I don’t know if -- if Representative Stafstrom has the language we have. I’d be happy to send you the bill as we had handed it over to Sean Scanlon.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): But the only difference is that had education as well; right?

SCOTT WILSON: No. It -- okay, so location we would prefer that the manner of the firearm, or --

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Yeah. That’s in the bill.

SCOTT WILSON: Yes. Right, as opposed to location, so that is the main issue. I think -- I think if -- if some common-sense education component is either developed or adopted from the National Rifle Associations Eddie Eagle program or a National Shooting Sports Foundation or we would be happy to
sit down with the Board of Education or whoever, and help develop that program.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): But you don’t have any other -- because the actual proposed bill does have manner instead of location as --

SCOTT WILSON: Right.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): You desired. You don’t have any other problems with the bill besides that you want education as well; right?

SCOTT WILSON: That’s correct.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, so you don’t -- it’s not your position that there’s any 2nd Amendment problems with HB 7218?

SCOTT WILSON: Yeah. Our biggest concern is that this is all punitive as opposed to preventative, and I think that right now I think somebody that does store their firearm in an irresponsible manner, and yes, there are -- there are definitely people that are irresponsible with guns. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be sitting in here today, okay. So, I do think that there’s room for talk about that, but I also think that it probably at the end of the day for somebody to go through the grief and trauma of having either their child killed or a friend of a child killed with their gun that their friend was over at the house and got killed with their gun that somebody took from me as a parent and let them -- let them play with it, I’m not so sure that the punitive and the civil liability and all the things that go along with that are really going to stop somebody if the common sense isn’t there in the first place, so that’s -- that’s what I’m saying is what I’m trying to say is --
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay.

SCOTT WILSON: You can have all the penalties in the world. People are going to find a way to hurt themselves, unfortunately, and that’s been proven with -- you know, with guns, with swimming pools, with skateboards, with -- with automobiles and texting and all kind of things.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay, so I see what you’re saying, but there’s no -- 7218 wouldn’t infringe on the 2nd Amendment as far as you’re concerned?

SCOTT WILSON: I think that if -- if the language does turn into something where somebody cannot access a firearm in the middle of the night to stop a -- you know a home invader or something like that, then yes. That would definitely infringe on the 2nd Amendment right, but right now, the way the language is worded, I don’t see it.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. All right, and so I just wanted to go to 7223, which is in a motor vehicle -- safe storage. You don’t see any 2nd Amendment problem with that bill; do you?

SCOTT WILSON: No.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. And, so the 7219, the ghost guns. You know, I understand that there’s some doubts as to its effectiveness on your part, but you don’t see any 2nd Amendment problems with that bill; do you?

SCOTT WILSON: Well, what I see a problem with that is the very fact that if I -- I as an individual, as a sovereign being, as a sovereign individual, if I have the time, the wherewithal, the ability to acquire the tools and manifest in design, something
that I can conceive of as a firearm out a hunk of aluminum or a hunk of some type of steel, if I wanted to do that and I’m not a prohibited person. An otherwise prohibited person either adjudicated, mentally deficient, or a convicted felon, I would think that yes. I mean I’m not even talking about buying the ghosting kit. I’m talking about be able to just use my own skills to be able to manufacturer a firearm.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): So, that’s the only part of that bill that you think poses a 2nd Amendment issue?

SCOTT WILSON: No. I -- I think that -- I think the fact that the kits do require a lot of machining. I do think that they are not a firearm, that there is -- you know we go back to the block of aluminum argument where if it’s not a firearm, if it’s not over the 80 percent, if it’s within the federal guidelines, the federal government said you can buy these kits, I don’t see what the problem is. we all know that the criminal is the majority of the guns they’re getting are stolen on the streets or they’re straw purchased in stores -- straw sold. So, maybe if we tried a little more punitive measures for the criminals to act as a deterrent, we might have a little better success with some of the new violent crime that’s going on.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, I understand, again, that you think -- [Crosstalk].

SCOTT WILSON: -- passports.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): You think that other -- other methods might be more effective.

SCOTT WILSON: Sure.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): But you don’t think that if you as a hobbyist build a gun in your house -- you don’t think it violates the 2nd Amendment for you to have to go within 30 days of completing this manufacture or assembly to DESPP and -- and notify them and put a serial number on that weapon that you built; do you?

SCOTT WILSON: Can you repeat that?

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Yeah, sure. [Laughing]. You don’t think it violates the 2nd Amendment that within 30 days after you complete the manufacture or assembly of your home-built weapon that you should have to put a serial number on it and notify DESPP?

SCOTT WILSON: I think -- I think if it’s my gun and I manufacture that I shouldn’t have to do that. Would I want to do that? I might want to do that. I don’t know. I’m not at the level where I would manufacture a firearm myself.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay.

SCOTT WILSON: I know that some probably have testified here today that they wouldn’t want to put the number on there. I know if I did build it I would not want to put it on there probably, but I might.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): But you don’t think it violates the 2nd Amendment to have to put that --

SCOTT WILSON: Sure, it does. Yeah. Again, yes, I do. I don’t think that it’s the state’s place to tell somebody if they build something out of the fruits of their labor that essentially it’s -- it’s a quasi-defactor of registration once you put the number on it.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Do you think it violates the 2nd Amendment to have to -- if you're purchasing a weapon, that that weapon has to have a serial number on it?

SCOTT WILSON: I have a gun right now that’s -- was built probably somewhere -- we can’t even track it down right now -- between 1955 and 1958. It’s a shotgun. It was my grandfather’s shotgun. I have never once thought of taking that gun and putting a serial number on it and going down to the state and registering it.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay, but that -- this law wouldn’t make you do that. It’s only if you are building a gun, if you’re completing the manufacture, so you’re building your own gun, or you’re seeking to transfer a weapon? You have to have a serial number.

SCOTT WILSON: Yeah, and I don’t think if you legally purchased the gun and you own the gun -- we already know it’s already been stated here today that you can’t transfer it without the serial number, but you can own it without the serial number.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Right.

SCOTT WILSON: You can’t build a gun and hand it off to somebody else without the serial number. At that point, you’re a manufacturer.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. So, we’re not talking about your guns, which we’ve -- so --

SCOTT WILSON: We’re not talking about my gun. I’m just saying if I bought the kit and I built the gun.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Yeah.
SCOTT WILSON: And, I want to own the gun, I shouldn’t have to put the serial number on there. I should, if I want to legally transfer it through an authorization process, and had it off to somebody else.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay, so -- all right. I see what you’re saying. So, the only thing you think could potentially infringe on the -- your 2nd Amendment rights in the ghost guns bill is if you build your own weapon from scratch, and you do not transfer it to anyone else, and you don’t want to put a serial number on it. If -- if you were forced to put a serial number on it, that’s the one element of that bill that would create 2nd Amendment problems for you.

SCOTT WILSON: Right, and the fact that the AR-15s and you know, the so-called assault weapons that are you know already banned in Connecticut and can’t be manufactured into those types of firearms either, so.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): I’m sorry. Say that again.

SCOTT WILSON: The AR-15 -- the lower receiver for the AR-15 cannot be built into an AR-15, so yes, that’s -- those are already legal. We’re talking we had -- we had an AR-15 lower that was in here earlier today that somebody -- that you know the CAGV had brought in and was showing. It would be legal to manufacture that into a firearm. So, we already have laws for all these things in one way, shape, or form, the only concern is the criminals that are doing whatever committing crimes with guns, violent crimes is -- is the chief issue that I see.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. I see what you’re saying, but -- you know, so since -- you’re saying since those things are already illegal, doing them just one step earlier wouldn’t be -- wouldn’t violate the 2nd Amendment --

SCOTT WILSON: Yes.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Is that what you’re saying?

SCOTT WILSON: What I’m saying -- well, I will say that we have over what 20-something plus thousand laws on the books across the country in one way, shape, or form, and growing because every year at the -- at the local, federal -- state, and federal level, we keep adding more and more laws, you know, and it’s just we’re always looking for a problem for a solution it would seem to me.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. All right. I thank you, sir.


SCOTT WILSON: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): We had a couple folks who were in the restroom and the hallway -- Ernestine Holloway. You have the floor, ma’am.

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Good evening, chairperson, co-chairperson, and this committee -- Judiciary Committee, my name is Reverend Ernestine Holloway. I am a community advocate for Meriden, a member of CCDL, and I also represent CTRA, Connecticut Republican Assembly. I listened to you
guys all day. You all give me a headache. [Laughter]. You all gave me a headache because you need to deal with reality. Reality is criminals -- you are trying to put law to criminals, which hasn’t worked in umpteen years, and it’s not gonna work now. I’m speaking because I come from a family that’s on both sides of the law -- the criminals and the people that are legal. The legal people will abide by the law. The criminals will never do. So, I just didn’t understand, and I’m a little angry. If you pass HB No. 7219, anybody that went to school and had woodshop know if you got a bar of soap, potatoes, wood, you can make a gun, so with this law, all those kids that experiment in shop, will be in jail of a felony. I just thought that was very interesting. So, let’s get rid of -- according what they said today ‘cause I listened -- let’s get rid of all of that so we won’t have no shop classes ‘cause kids won’t be able to build nothing, and oh yeah, don’t forget You Tube ‘cause if you go to You Tube, I find you can build everything ‘cause my daughter told me today, “Could you buy me some wood” and I said, “For what?” “I want to try to build this?” I said, “that’s illegal and you better not build it.” How long did it take you to put that together? Oh, it’s very easy. I just listened to it for a couple of hours, and I figured out how to make it, so you would have to get rid of You Tube.

Now, let’s talk about SB No. 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT. Here’s what bothers me about that being an African American woman and being pulled over by the state police just because I was running election and needed a permit. Could you imagine if I had a -- a -- a license to carry a gun what they would have don’t to me? They
wouldn’t have asked me for no permit. They would have locked my black behind up, put me in handcuffs, went to the precinct. I’d been called a thug and -- and Craig Fishbein, come and get me. [Laughter]. That’s reality. When you make these laws, you have to take the different races into consideration. I know people don’t want to deal with it, but it is what it is. I would love to say every police officer abides by the law. The fact that I got pulled over for doing the election thing and needing a permit -- a peddler’s license -- excuse me -- shows me that everybody doesn’t abide by the law. And, I listened to the Mayor Ganim today. [Bell]. I just I couldn’t stop laughing at him, so that probably wasn’t a good thing. But, what I’m gonna say to you is --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Could you just wrap up?

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Yes, I am. I want to talk about 7223 real quickly because like I said there are criminals in my family. I see them go into a car from the window -- ’cause I’m from New York, Brooklyn -- pop a lock, pop other things that they have in the trunk, three minutes, and then the alarm goes off. What good would this do because locks are not made for thieves.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee. Representative Dubitsky. [Laughter].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Sorry, Doug. [Laughing].
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, thank you -- thank you for the confidence. I -- I want to ask you about, you know, I -- I knew you were going to bring up the issue of profiling, but you -- you put a little twist on it that I want to ask you about. They -- in one jurisdiction that you were in required some type of solicitation permit.

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Peddler’s license.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Peddler’s license. Did you have any idea that you needed a peddler’s license in that town?

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Well, I went and I looked at their books because I’m a reader. That’s something that I learned from some of you guys. You gotta read it and know what you’re talking about. When I looked in their book, they had so many laws that was so askew, but they didn’t have anything concerning politicians going door-to-door. What I found was had I collected $5 dollars in donations like the state requires to do, I would have went to jail because it’s illegal to solicit, so I said, “So how does this apply to politicians?” He said, “I don’t know.” “So, you mean to tell me I could have got arrested?” He was like, “Yes.”

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, you -- so you -- so two of the bills that are up tonight will affect you in that situation.

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Absolutely.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): The profiling situation.

REVEREND ERENSTINE HOLLOWAY: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, the local regulation. If -- if that local municipality had firearms laws
for example, and you were lawfully carrying a firearm to protect yourself, you may not -- even if you looked in their -- in their books, perhaps you may have seen it, perhaps not.

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: I’m gonna say this to you. I’m a victim of domestic violence, and I don’t talk about it too often, and I was gonna take the class to get the permit, and I was getting ready to fill out the paperwork to get the permit. After the police pulled me over and racially profiled me and 16 other people, I didn’t file the paperwork. I was too scared. I was scared that they were gonna see my skin and see an African American, and pull me over and arrest me. Unfortunately, I’d like to say some of us don’t live in the real world. African Americans with permits have gotten killed, so I want to know how would this apply -- and then I looked at that video of the guy in Bridgeport. There’s something called racism and classism, and that’s what I saw. And, I don’t think we understand the difference. They saw a black man. He said he had a gun, he let them know when she asked him. They called the police. They sent three white police offers, and then they sent the big black one that stood about 6 feet 4 inches, 300 and something pounds, and I looked at the video, and I said, oh, yeah, that’s racism, and yeah, that’s classism. I said I wonder if they know the difference. If that man would not have came, I promise you they would have whipped his tail and put him in jail. And, I’m not saying all cops are crooked ‘cause I have some police officer friends who I adore, the ones that took me in when we was kids and even grabbed me by my collar and took me home. I can respect them, but that’s not the same police officer from yesterday
and today, and they will profile us. I’m sorry. It’s just reality, and I’m trying not to cry. It’s just the reality. Do you know how many black people that want to get permits that don’t want to have a gun illegally, but they know if -- I live in Meriden. If they took their happy behinds down to the Meriden precinct and tried to get a permit, it would be sitting on somebody’s desk because they just won’t because the color of their skin.

So, if you pass this law, just know I’m gonna be the first one to hire an attorney to fight you on it because I think it’s a little bit of racial profiling in there, and a lot of Latin people are gonna go to jail. And, would you want to be responsible for some cop coming over to you or police officer coming over to you and say, I want to see your permit, and I say, it’s my right I don’t have to show you a permit. Am I doing something? No. But your black behind is going to jail, they rough me up, and put me in handcuffs. Do you want that responsibility? Until you word this correctly and change the verbiage of some of this stuff that you guys are trying to pass, you’re gonna hurt people, and you’re gonna hurt an industry of people that got guns with no serial numbers to it, and I know a lot about guns, and I also know the ones that break the law. I had a father who broke the law, who saw things and had it. He was a criminal. Should he have went to jail? Absolutely.

So, I think that to answer your questions, yes. It is racial profiling, and I think that we’re gonna have a problem with some of this. And, I also want to say why invest in a lock that it will take me six minutes to break into because I’m not professional,
but my daughter at eight-years-old took tweezers and a pick and picked my father’s lock. She was six.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Did you hear Senator Looney’s testimony?

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: I think he’s crazy. [Laughter].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Sorry.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Folks.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Did --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, ma’am, ma’am, excuse me.

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: I said, sorry. I said, sorry.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, now his -- his possible solution for the -- for getting around the 4th Amendment violation would be for the police to stop every person that they saw with -- with a firearm. How would that go over in your neighborhood?

REVEREND ERNESTINE HOLLOWAY: Well, I think that is very interesting when they can’t pull over cars at a DUI, pull over every car, so -- and they don’t have enough police officers to do it when they doing those checks, so how they gonna do that with guns? Everybody’s walking down the street, and you’re gonna say, hey, you got a gun? That means you gotta stop them, you gotta seize them, and you gotta check them because somebody may not admit that they got a gun. I think that’s ludicrous, and I think the police got a lot of other things they’d rather do than search everybody coming down the block. And,
besides, didn’t New York City get in trouble for that?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I believe they did. Okay. Thank you very much. I appreciate it.


KRISTINE WITHERILL: All right. Good evening, my name is Kristine Witherill. I’m executive member of Connecticut Citizens’ Defense League. I serve the organization as the membership coordinator. I’m a Veteran of the United States Air Force as are both of my parents. I married a Marine, and two of my five children are currently in the Air -- or Army. Excuse me. Sorry boys. I live in Ledyard where I bought my first home ever in the history of my life. I submitted my testimony online, so I’m just gonna kind of speak on things that are a little more important to me. I want to start my testimony by stating that my heart goes out to your family. I have said that -- and I also discussed -- I also lost a family member. My cousin, who I was raised as siblings were to the minute a month apart, we were. I lost him two and a half months before his 21st birthday. He was killed by a jealous lover when he displayed disinterest on continuing a relationship after she informed him that she was pregnant. She went into her brother’s gun safe, selected a 12-gauge shotgun, and when my cousin tried to call her bluff, she pulled the trigger.

With that being said, -- excuse me -- so as I kind of referenced with Mr. Song, we -- I was at a panel-
style discussion on Thursday, and education was brought up as a deterrent to further loss of life. Both CCDL executives, John Basile, who’s also spoken and Mr. Song was present. Firearm accidents are most often due to lack of proper handling and lack of education, not proper storage, and so lack of criminal charges sought against the gun owner. Education is the key in keeping our children safe. In addition to attempting -- oh, excuse me.

I also oppose SB 60, which can lead to racial profiling. As a white woman in Ledyard, I can open carry. No one bats an eye. I can go in Walmart. I can walk down the street. No one bats an eye. I’d fear this would not be the case of a man or a woman of color in a more urban area trying to just practice their 2nd Amendment right.

Also, I support SB 940. This will would allow pistol permit holders to carry in state parks and forests. These guns -- these gun-free zones are just imaginary boundaries. They’ll only disarmed law-abiding citizens while doing nothing to stop criminals.

I also support HB 5227, which is the municipalities making their own laws. This would ensure that all Connecticut residents would have equal rights regardless of what town they live in, regardless of demographics or political leaning of the representative. I’m open to questions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks so much for being with us. Next up is John Gori, followed by William Hillman.
JOHN GORI: Good evening members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is John Gori. I reside in Milford, Connecticut, and I’ll quickly go over what I support and oppose, and then talk briefly on it.

I support the following bills: Bill 940, Bill 5227, and Bill 5870. Regarding 940, AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN PERSONS TO CARRY HANDGUNS IN THE STATE PARKS AND FORESTS. It doesn’t make any sense to me why this was the other way already. As legal gun owners, we are able to carry anywhere throughout the state, and just imagine on one side of the road you can carry, but as soon as you go in the park, you can’t carry. It just doesn’t make any logical sense why there’s a restriction on that because the same laws apply, the same rules apply of proper carry, and you know lawful carry. 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATIONS OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES. I think it’s just like as we’re here today these bills today are statewide. We’re talking about statewide gun bills today. Why would we have different gun bills amongst municipalities. Of course, it’s logical that there’s no way we could keep track of them, and the state law is that we own a Connecticut state permit to carry, so why would we have different rules throughout different cities. Also, the other one, Bill 5870, and I don’t really have no comment to that for timewise.

Going to the bills I oppose as written. Bill 7223 and Bill 7218. My concern in those two are, of course, the one thing I really oppose is the felony penalty. It seems too easy to want to give felony penalties to an act of omission, and this could just be a one act. Maybe somebody -- I believe in one storage. I believe in all my guns are locked up; they’re doubled layered in security. I do believe
that. I believe every gun owner should abide by that, but what if there’s one act where someone said, maybe came home late and you left your gun on your bed or whatever, but that one act of omission and it makes you a felon, and that’s the thing where I have a problem with a lot of these laws that are being made up. It’s the law-abiding gun owner isn’t committing acts of co-omission. They’re getting penalized for an act of omission. You know, not doing something one particular time, and you’re a felon, which brings me up to the storage in the cars, and I can build on this a little bit, but the storage in the car -- I was trying to ask people what is the legal law for, you know, leaving your gun in a car if you have to gun to a gun-free zone such as a post office or something like that where you can’t take your gun in there, but you’ve -- you’ve been around all day, so how do you keep your gun in a car? Now, I have two vehicles. Personally, my truck has a lock gun box in it, and I utilize it. My car, which I just got, doesn’t have that, but I do -- again, I can’t emphasize enough. I do not want anybody to take my gun. [Bell]. I do not ever want it to be stolen. If I could continue for one minute? But the thing that occurs to me is I heard somebody say that they had their gun locked in the car, and it got stolen, and that they got their license suspended, taken away, they’re gun license, and for what reason. I don’t know if they got it back or not, but if this is the law that’s going to go into effect because you feel so strongly about it, does that mean that if -- and I know you have talked before about what are the parameters of the state? What are they looking for? The state. I think that’s another kind of term that’s ambiguous if you think about it because as they describe some
of these gun safes really won’t hold against a screwdriver, so if you’re going to make this a law that somebody has to lock their gun in their car for safe storage and somebody breaks in and steals it, am I now responsible?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, let me ask you this.

JOHN GORI: Yeah.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): You lock your gun in your car; correct? In your truck?

JOHN GORI: In the truck. I have done it a couple times, yeah.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Why do you do that?

JOHN GORI: ‘Cause I had to go into a gun-free zone -- the post office.


JOHN GORI: Oh, yeay. No. I’m all for gun -- lawful gun storage. What I oppose is the -- the felony penalties. You know, again, that goes to the crest of my opposition of these bills.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): But you have a gun safe, so you understand what a gun safe is; correct?

JOHN GORI: Yeah, but -- but you saw somebody brought up here one that we attach with a cable. See, it’s two ambiguous for everybody I think; right? What creates that gun safe -- ‘cause even the one I have in my truck, if you took a screwdriver -- if I took a big sized screwdriver, I could bust it open. So, what I’m saying to you is you say, okay, this is what we want. We want to
lock up the guns in the cars; right. If you’re gonna leave it in there to go into a gun-free zone in particular, whatever, and somebody breaks into that car and takes a screwdriver and breaks into that. Do I -- do I get my license suspended?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, it’s still -- you’ll agree with me though, will you not, that it’s still a deterrent. It’s -- it’s far harder to --

JOHN GORI: Right, but if you’re -- if you’re making a law like that, let’s say, right; does that now -- I don’t know what the proper word is -- but excuse me from the board of suspending my license because of a suitability issue? Because it was locked up even though as people describe these safes they can be broken into. You know, they’re not -- they’re -- it’s kind of like --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, I think it would be the burden of proof from the prosecutor to prove that you did not have the gun in the safe.

JOHN GORI: Well, that’s not what I’m talking about. I’m asking if you make this a law -- fine, and my gun is in the safe and it gets broken into, and somebody steals the -- the thing, it’s beyond just -- like you said, there’s an issue of it being a felony penalty against the governor, but what about the suitability issue with the board?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right.

JOHN GORI: You know, because like I said -- described -- somebody locked it into their car and it got broken into, and they automatically -- I think a lot of times your gun gets taken away by the police because of a suitability issue, and then you have to go fight them, right -- not fight them, but
go debate them, whatever, and as you saw there, it takes like two and a half years to get your license back because of the long wait, so.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Further questions from the committee. Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, sir. Thank you for waiting around with us here today. I really appreciate your testimony. Do you have any knowledge as to hunting in Connecticut?

JOHN GORI: I do not hunt. I do not have a hunting license.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Do you have any knowledge as to how -- how young one can hunt in this state?

JOHN GORI: I do not.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions. I’m seeing none. Thank you very much.

JOHN GORI: Yeah, thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up would be Brian Anderson. Is Brian still with us? Angela Montgomery. And, then I have Sarah Raskin up next.

ANGELA MONTGOMERY: This is on?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yeah.

ANGELA MONTGOMERY: Yes? Okay. Good evening. It’s been a long day. Chairs and distinguished members of the joint committee of Judiciary, my name is Dr. Angela Montgomery. I am a Guilford resident, a
pediatrician, and a mother of two. I am here providing testimony this evening on behalf of the Connecticut Chapter of Mom’s Demand Action for gun sense in America in support of House Bill 7218. This bill has been carefully written to close loophole in our current safe storage requirements that continue to place our children and our communities at risk and make it difficult to hold firearm owners accountable when they store their firearms unsafely. I joined Mom’s Demand Action in the days following Ethan Song’s death, recognizing that I owed it to Ethan, to my own children, to all children really to do more to prevent unintentional gun deaths like Ethan’s. And, our group continues to fight right alongside the Song family because we know that deaths like Ethan’s can be prevented with safer gun storage laws.

An estimated 4.6 million American children live in households with at least one loaded unlocked firearm. The number quoted earlier today was 1.7 -- it’s actually 4.6 million. That’s 7 percent of all U.S. children according to recent studies. Since 2015, there have been at least 1071 unintentional shootings in the United States with hundreds resulting in preventable deaths. Furthermore, when American children die by firearm suicide, over 80 percent of them use a weapon belonging to a family members, most often a parent. They’re getting these guns at home. By restricting unauthorized access to firearms, responsible storage laws work to prevent these types of tragedies before they occur, and allow law enforcement to hold firearm owners accountable when a child does access an unsafely stored firearm and harm results.
As a mother and a pediatrician, this issue is personal for me as it is for the members of Mom’s Demand Action. As Ethan’s Law -- as Ethan’s death proves an unloaded gun can be just as dangerous as one that is loaded, we cannot risk repeating this tragedy that unfolded in Guilford in January of last year when the evidence is clear. Study after study demonstrates that responsible firearm storage reduces childhood firearm injuries and deaths. You’ve heard a lot of testimony today about gun safety education programs for children like Eddie Eagle. You have head anecdotal testimony that this type of education worked to keep individual kids safe, but tragically, that didn’t play out with Ethan and his friend, nor does it play out in recent research. More often than not, children do not carry this education over to real-life scenarios, and the consequences can be deadly. The onus for preventing childhood gun access belongs on the adult [Bell] gun owners. I’m finishing up. And, they need to be held accountable for tragedies that occur as a result of the unsafe storage of their firearms. In closing, we cannot bring Ethan back, but we can prevent other childhood gun deaths like his. For Ethan and all of our children, I urge you to pass HB 7218, and I thank you for your consideration.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH):  Thank you. Questions for the committee? I’m seeing none. I want to thank you for being with us today. Sarah Raskin followed by Peter Escrada.

SARAH RASKIN:  Hi, thanks for sticking it out. Chairs and distinguished members of the joint committee on the Judiciary, my name is Sarah Raskin. I live in West Hartford, Connecticut. I am a neuropsychologist, a professor of Psychology and
Neuroscience at Trinity College, and I serve on the Board of Directors of Connecticut Against Gun Violence. My work involves research to improve the lives of people who have neurological disorders. I see every day the interplay of guns and mental illness, and I would like to submit testimony today in favor of greater safety regulations for gun violence prevention. In particular, I am testifying in support of HB 7218 and HB 7223, and it turns out that Neuroscience has some important information for you as you deliberate these bills. The part of the brain that’s responsible for impulse control, emotion regulation, and sound decision making is the frontal lobes of the brain, and the frontal lobes of the brain are not fully developed until about 18 and 25 years of age. These are the part of the brain that has been called the area of sober second thought.

In a recent study with young children, Yale researchers showed that no matter how many times you teach them to avoid guns, no matter how much training you give them, no matter how much education, the allure of a gun is just too strong. Children were specifically selected because their parents insisted that they had been carefully educated to avoid guns and would never touch a gun. These carefully selected children were then given the NRA Eddie Eagle training program, and this was followed the next day by a police officer coming in and reinforcing for them that they should never touch a gun, that if they see a gun they should exit the room and find an adult immediately. The police officer then left some unloaded guns around the classroom, and the teacher left the room and said, I need to get something. I’ll be right back, and the
children were observed with hidden cameras in pairs. The first thing each child did upon finding the gun was pick it up, and either point it at the other child or look down the barrel themselves. The parents watching these videos were shocked, and again, swore they never would have believed that a child to had gone through the Eddie Eagle program would do this. But we now know that this is exactly what a child will do. It’s just too exciting. And, keep in mind, even teens don’t have good impulse control. Although their frontal lobes aren’t fully developed until they’re 25, their medullas are fully developed at 11, and this is the part of the brain responsible for gut impulse and emotion.

Thus, teens are often described as all gas pedal and no brake. [Bell]. This means in moments of emotion they will act solely on impulse, and these impulses lead to accidental shootings, impulsive shootings, and suicides --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

SARAH RASKIN: And, these all could have been prevented.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you so much for being with us. Peter Escrada, followed by Ray Bevis.

PETER ESCRADA: Good evening, to the distinguished members of the joint committee, I want to thank you for your time today. My name is Peter Escrada. I’m a resident at Hamden, and I’m here to ask you guys to oppose a few bills and support a few bills, which would be SB 60, HB 7218, HB 7219, and HB 7223 is the bills I would like you guys to oppose, and I would
like everyone to support SB 940, 5227, and 5870. But the reason I’m really here is really to talk more about one of the bills that I think will impact myself and people in my community, which is really HB -- I’m sorry -- SB 60, THE ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT, and the reason I feel that -- that you should oppose this bill is because my opinion this will -- will really encourage racial profiling, and stop and frisk people of color. As a Puerto Rican, I experienced racial profiling myself as family members and friends, and you know, it’s not fun. It’s not fun at all. So, I just wanted to talk -- everyone talks about like the bill and you know the constitutionality of it. I want to talk about the impact of what the bill can actually have on people of color, and that interaction with the police officer. How the interactions gonna, you know, come about when a police officer decides to pull you over, or you know, just approach you and ask you for your permit, and it’s pretty much, you know, what do you do. A police officer comes up to you, says, hey, how you doing? I see you’re carrying a firearm. Can I see your permit? What -- how -- how is that interaction gonna end? You know, me as a Puerto Rican, is that police officer gonna see me the same as a white male? You know, that’s something that you really have to ask yourself. I grew up in New York City, and New York City, in Manhattan in the barrio, it’s common. A 14-year-old hanging out in front of your building, you know, cops just come over, they roll by, lower the windows, guys get up, get off the bench, pat you down. It’s not a fun experience. [Bell]. Do you want to amplify that with -- with you know a person of color with a gun, you know, and --
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you for your testimony. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks for being here, sir.

PETER ESCADA: All right.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Ray Bevis, followed by Christopher Schenck.

RAY BEVIS: Good -- good evening, good night, whichever it is. Representative Stafstrom, distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. My name’s Ray Bevis. I’m the legislative coordinator for Connecticut Citizens’ Defense League. I’m here in support of HB 940, AN ACT AUTHORIZING PERSONS -- CERTAIN PERSONS TO CARRY HANDGUNS IN THE STATE PARKS AND FORESTS, in support of HB 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATIONS OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES, support of 5870, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES. I’m opposing HB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A PERMIT. I’m opposing AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS, and I’m opposing 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF PISTOLS OR REVOLVERS IN VEHICLES. I’m requesting amendment to 50 -- or 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN HOMES.

So, I’m going to address -- we heard a lot of testimony tonight, so I’m just going to address some key things. Regarding some municipality bill, we have towns in Connecticut still that only allow for open carry. Do you know which towns they are? There’s only one that only says you can open carry within city limits. It bans concealed carries. We have towns that could ban the possession of firearms in public streets or outdoors if there is a state of emergency. We have towns that if they declare a
civic -- a civil emergency they could force gun stores to close, and we have towns that ban 16 and 17-year-olds from hunting. We even have towns that ban parents from teaching their children under the age of 12 from target shooting, so these are just some of the regulations that are on the books already, and we don’t know -- you know, it’s hard for the average gun owners who don’t realize which towns have these ordinances unless you really study them and spend months studying these ordinances to try to get these regulations, so it’s just something to be concerned with as a law-abiding gun owner, you’re traveling through the state -- we live in a very compact state, so as we heard numerous times tonight, you can literally travel through 14 or 15 towns in one day. I’m opposing Senate Bill 60, an act concerning the presentation of a carry permit. We’ve heard numerous testimonies from police officers saying it’s a simple interaction, and I can tell you from personal experience -- I’ve had two interactions with police officers. The only time in my life I was ever put in the back of a police car was when I was involved in a motor vehicle accident, and I told the officer I had my sidearm on me -- my right side, and he said, well for your protection and my protection, I’m going to put you in the back of my police car. He disarmed me, disassembled my firearm, ran my firearm serial number to see if it was stolen. The only time I was ever in the back of a police car. The second time I was detained for about 35 minutes while one officer said, nope, your -- I saw your firearm, that’s a breach of peace. I said, officer, that’s not a breach of peace. He said, it’s only concealed carry in Connecticut. I said, no, where’s the word concealed show on my permit? So, he goes, I don’t know. Let me call my
sergeant, and he called his sergeant. I had to wait for the sergeant to come, and this interaction went on. Meanwhile, my children are standing right next to me. They are like very -- you know, they are concerned, weren’t sure what was happening, so it’s not a very simple interaction. You know, with the police officer up here oh just show me your ID, but after you talk to most police officers on the side and you say, if you approach an armed man, what’s the first thing you’re gonna do? The first thing they’re gonna do is disarm them until they realize who you are.

And, I also want to point out that this bill is only targeting [Bell] the permit holders. So, lines 6 and 7 of the bill say such permit holders shall present his or her permit upon the request of the officer. It doesn’t say the person carrying the gun must show identification. It says the permit holder, so thank you.


REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, Mr. Bevis. One of the bills that you’ve come here in support of is 5227; if I recall correctly?

RAY BEVIS: Five -- yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, that’s the one that has to do with regulation municipalities and that kind of stuff. In your experience, have you run into occasions where different municipalities have different rules? In this area?

RAY BEVIS: Yes. Absolutely, yes. So, I run into numerous municipalities that have rules.
Unfortunately, I wasn’t aware of them sometimes until after the fact, but yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And -- and personally, have you gotten into trouble or have you heard of people getting into trouble locally because they didn’t know about those laws?

RAY BEVIS: Personally, I have not. I have heard of a few people carrying in parks that they didn’t realize that carrying in open space or they thought the open space wasn’t a park, and in the town, said well that is a park.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Mr. Bevis, just real quick here. A name was referenced earlier with respect to this education issue. Let me make sure I understand what your organization is advocating, so you’re -- are you advocating for a mandate that every school district in the state provide firearm safety instruction to students?

RAY BEVIS: No.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

RAY BEVIS: So, what we’re -- what we’re --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I didn’t think so. I just wanted to make sure because --

RAY BEVIS: Right, so -- yep.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, you’re not -- you’re not asking us to pass legislation that would mandate that every school in Bridgeport provide firearm safety training to all the students in Bridgeport; correct?
RAY BEVIS: Correct. So, it’s --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, you’re advocating -- I just want to make sure I understand. I’m not trying to put words in your mouth. I’m going to let you expand in a second. If I understand it correctly, what you’re advocating for is that the Department of Education would basically create a model curriculum, and then the school districts could decide whether to use that curriculum or not?

RAY BEVIS: That is correct. So, tonight we’ve heard a lot about Ethan Song and the tragedy that surrounded him, but what we haven’t heard a lot about is DJ Kenny who’s the 12-year-old that lost his life almost 30 years ago, and where this original bill -- safe storage bill originated from, and what we’re asking is really to -- at least the state to develop -- I think if there’s a cost concern, we can say develop or adopt a firearm safety curriculum, and I just want to -- there are some people that have been talking -- it’s not actually bringing a firearm into school, showing how -- kids how to handle a gun. It’s really a basic instruction to say you see a gun, you don’t touch, you leave, you go tell an adult. Just like stop, drop, and roll is taught in schools.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yeah, but ultimately -- ultimately, that would be for the Department of Education to decide; correct?

RAY BEVIS: Correct. Whatever -- right.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): They decide what the model curriculum would be.

RAY BEVIS: Absolutely. We would have no -- no -- no input on that, I guess.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. And, you know, it’s been -- I think it’s your testimony this law has been on the books -- this may have been on the books for almost 30 years; correct?

RAY BEVIS: Correct.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Prior to the introduction of the bill that brings us here today or the discussion of the bill that brings us here today, has your organization -- to your knowledge -- ever reached out to the Department of Education to request they develop this curriculum?

RAY BEVIS: Prior to January or -- prior to January of this year?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yes.

RAY BEVIS: Yes. We have.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. When was that?

RAY BEVIS: Back in October, I believe.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. All right. So, let me ask you this. Prior to -- and I think the discussion of the current bill that brings us back here today started prior to legislative session. It was probably back in the fall sometime, so prior to the -- prior to the fall of 2018, when we started having the discussion of safe storage, had your organization, to your knowledge ever reached out to Department of Education and said, hey, there’s this law in the books that says you may develop a curriculum, when you gonna get around to doing that?

RAY BEVIS: No, not prior because honestly we thought of the idea when we said we were thinking about actual prevention, and that’s when we did
legislative research and found out this was already on the statutes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): All right. And, you’ll agree with me the Department of Education hasn’t seemed fit to develop this curriculum under many governor and many different commissioners, several of whom were republicans, some -- several who are democrat, but it’s been -- it’s been several administrations that is not -- had not gone forward with developing that curriculum.

RAY BEVIS: The State Board of Ed told me that the statute didn’t exist.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

RAY BEVIS: So, I had to refer to them numerous times to the statute, and they told me it still wasn’t on the books, and then when I sent them the link, they said, we’ll get back to you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

RAY BEVIS: So.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Have they gotten back to you?

RAY BEVIS: Yes. They have. They told me they never developed it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. All right. Thank you. Further questions? Representative Fishbein, for the second time.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you for the second time. I wouldn’t have asked this before your question. Mr. Bevis, since the law has been on the books for close to 30 years and prior education has not seemed fit to develop
this, if the legislature were to -- you know, many times we create task forces for the purposes of coming up with, receiving ideas, and perhaps making recommendations; would that be a task force that you would be interested in sitting on?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Absolutely. We would offer our services to whatever we can.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.


CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Chairs and distinguished members of the committee, I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 7218, AN ACT CONERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. My name is Christopher Schenck. I’m a medical student at the Yale School of medicine. My views do not reflect the views of the Yale School of Medicine. I am here today as a concerned citizen and future healthcare provider. I respectfully urge the committee to support HB 7218, because it will work to protect the children of the state of Connecticut from firearm related injury and death. Firearm injury is the second leading cause of death among youth.

More than 3000 children and adolescents died because of firearm injury in 2016, including over 1000 deaths by suicide. We know that there was a strong relationship between firearm access and suicide in adolescents. The data I present today are provided by independent research groups with no agenda other
than to provide us with the unbiased truth. Almost half of teenagers who completed suicide use a firearm, and they are more than 2.5 times more likely than their peers to have had access to a firearm. These are preventable deaths, and protecting children by ensuring safe storage of firearms will be crucial in addressing the issue of youth suicide.

In cases where children and adolescents attempted or completed suicide with a firearm or were injured by an unintentional discharge, the firearms were less likely to be stored locked, unloaded, or separate from ammunition. HB 7218 requires safe storage of firearms on the premises where individuals under the age of 18 may have access to them. Defining a minor as an individual under 18, compared to an individual under 16 under the current definition in Section 29-37, will help protect adolescents at an age where they are at higher risk of suicide. Access to a firearm can be the difference between life and death in a time of crisis. HB No. 7218 will help protect the children of Connecticut from firearm suicide and unintentional death. These data are not debatable. The question is now what we will do with the information provided to us, and who we will prioritize without answer.

As a medical student, I have learned that the best way to treat a disease is prevent it from happening in the first place. This is exactly what HB 7218 will do, and I ask that the committee support this bill to protect the health and well being of everyone living in the state of Connecticut. I’m early in my medical training, and I have not yet met a patient affected by gun violence. The unfortunate reality is that I inevitably will. While this bill
will be an important step in improving the health and safety of our communities, it will not solve this epidemic of gun violence. The relationship between firearm ownership and firearm death has been shown that the individual household state and national level, unless we act now to address this issue, there will continue to be grieving families in our emergency departments, and there will be empty seats in our schools. I respectfully urge the members of this committee to consider this in future legislation. Thank you, and I will take any questions at this time.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much for your testimony. Questions from the committee? Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, sir for your testimony, and -- and just so that I’m clear. Your testimony is based upon outside information, not your personal experiences as a medical student; is that fair to say?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, I chose to present the -- the information provided to us on -- on gun violence and -- and safe storage -- the effects of safe storage. The findings of -- of independent research groups over the last few decades. I think in this discussion, we really need to focus on the evidence that we have, and I -- I have presented that evidence as -- as -- as truthfully and objectively as I can.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, no. I understand, and I’m just trying to -- trying to figure out because I mean you appear tonight, you’ve got a jacket on for a medical professional with a badge.
CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I’m trying to figure out -- I mean you’re obviously representing to us that you have some sort of -- you’re in the medical field. Is your testimony based upon someone else’s information or information that you have personally experienced in your role in the -- in the medical field?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, the reason I chose to wear this white coat tonight is to represent the commitment I have made to my patients -- future patients, the commitment I make to all individuals to help prevent disease and to treat disease when I have an opportunity to do so, and being before you tonight, I believe is -- is in line with that goal. I have presented you with information, and that -- findings from independent research groups because I -- I believe that looking at -- at the research that we have on -- on safe storage and on gun violence it -- it will be the best way to develop evidence-based legislation to address this crisis, and I don’t believe that anybody here would -- would disagree that -- that there is an epidemic of gun violence in America, that this is a public -- public health crisis, and I -- I merely use the -- the -- the findings of research groups published in -- in the most respected medical journals to highlight that these are the facts as we know them, and we should base policy based on -- based on research, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so I’m just -- I’m not trying to trick you. I guess the answer to the question is in the course of your medical training through Yale, that you have not come across these incidents that you’re testifying about? It’s from
other sources? Is that fair to say? I’m not trying
to -- I’m just trying to understand. Okay.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, sir. So, you know, thank
you for clarifying this. I -- I -- I -- have not
yet treated a patient affected by gun violence. I --
I do not think it would be -- I could not in good
conscience wait until I had that experience to come
and sit before this committee because I -- I believe
that the evidence is there that legislation such as
HB 7218 will save lives, and that is why I’m here
today because I see it as my obligation as a person
joining the medical profession to advocate for
legislation that will protect my future patients,
and the citizens of the state of Connecticut. Thank
you.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I’m just trying to figure
out, you know, on -- on what plane you’re testifying
--

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): To begin with, and I don’t
know if you’ve been here all day, you know,
listening to us --

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): You know, one of the things
we have talked about in conjunction with this --
many people have talked about some sort of
educational component.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Something like, you know,
instructing young people at least, you know if you
see a gun, stop, don’t touch, leave the area, tell
an adult. Do you think that that in conjunction
with the things that’s you read would be helpful or harmful in this situation in saving lives?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, I -- I support HB No. -- House Bill 7218 because we have evidence that safe storage saves lives. I, unfortunately, am not aware of evidence supporting the utility of -- of the education you speak of. I have not personally read those -- the results of those studies, although I believe somebody that testified earlier -- a neuropsychologist and a faculty member in that area -- said that there in fact was evidence that that is not effective, so while I -- I -- I wholly encourage people to -- to -- to educate people about -- about the safe usage of firearms, I do not believe that that will be sufficient to address this crisis.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, in addition to the language before us, you would see no value in something about teaching young children to stay -- I was going to use an expletive -- stay away from guns. There's no value in your mind based upon your testimony? You see no value in that?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, I -- I have chosen to testify today based on -- on the facts as we know them, and I apologize that I -- I do not -- I’m not familiar with the evidence regarding what you are stating. So, I would prefer not to speculate because I think in this discussion that the facts as we know them are more important than the opinions because in the end, we need legislation based on -- on facts.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Representative Carpino.

REP. CARPINO (32ND): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your passion, and I thank you for giving us your perspective. I just have a very specific question about something I thought you said.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, ma’am.

REP. CARPINO (32ND): But it’s getting late, so I want to make sure that I heard you correctly. I thought you said that you were merely discussing the information provided to us, and if I heard correctly, I’m just trying to understand the court that is us and who provided that information?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: When I said us, I meant that the committee and -- and the people in this room. As far as the people providing the information, I refer to numerous research groups that have studied, that have studied gun violence, and these are results published that were peer reviewed and published in the most respected medical journals over the last several decades, and these are -- and these are studies that are funded by primarily the Center for Disease Control and prevention as I am aware of the funding sources of the -- of the studies that I refer to in this testimony. In -- in addition, one was funded by the American Academy of Pediatrics, but I just wanted to clarify that as well.

REP. CARPINO (32ND): Thank you, and more simply said, these are merely the research articles and peer review documents that you as an individual had the opportunity to look at as opposed to a group
giving you some outside information to present. Is that accurate?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, ma’am.

REP. CARPINO (32ND): Thank you.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: I’m referring to the peer review literature as -- as published in -- in respected medical journals. Thank you.


REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. I apologize I missed the beginning part of your testimony. Do I understand correctly that you are a medical student?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Yes, sir. I am a medical student.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, did I hear you correctly to say that there is an epidemic of gun violence?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Most medical associations have adopted the position that gun violence is of a crisis of epidemic proportions in this country, and that it is a public health crisis. I refer specifically to the American College of Physicians paper published earlier -- I’m sorry. In the fall of 2018.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. What’s the definition of epidemic?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, I’m not an epidemiologist. I apologize. What I can -- what I will say is that there are -- there are over 36,000
there are over 36,000 deaths in the United States as a result of gun violence. That is the most recent data that we have in one year. If that is not of epidemic proportions, sir, I’m frankly unsure what would be.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Out of how many people?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: In this nation?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yes.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: There are over 300 million people in this nation.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so 36,000 out of 330 million people; is that a high percentage?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, I understand.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Let me interrupt.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): We are entering hour 12 of this public hearing. We still have several dozen people left to testify. We’re getting a little far field from the bill before us, so I would ask the Representative to get back to the bill before us, so that we can -- we can continue to move along. Thank you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I’m -- I’m trying to find out the -- the basis of the support for the bill, whether we have an increasing number of -- of gun violence cases or not, and the epidemic level certainly would have -- have a different response than if it were not epidemic, so I’m simply asking the witness if -- if we have an
increasing number and to -- to what extent is that an epidemic.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, as far as I’m aware, the -- the rate of gun deaths -- I’m sorry -- the incidents of gun deaths in this country has been relatively stable over the last decade, but this is -- this is in light of decreases and deaths. Other -- other causes of deaths such as motor vehicle accidents, so I think the lack of progress does not -- should not discourage the -- the -- the lack of an increase in gun deaths shouldn’t discourage the -- the members of this committee from taking action to address the deaths that do occur as a result of gun violence today.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): But it should prevent us from histrionics and using words like epidemic when the rate of violence and gun deaths has been decreasing drastically for the last 20 years, so you’re using the word epidemic, so I just want to find out why is it an epidemic now when it has -- when the rate of gun violence has been -- has been more than cut in half in the last 20 years? How is it now an epidemic?

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Sir, with all due respect, I -- I appreciate you know this line of questioning and commentary, but I -- I would just reiterate the fact that over 100 people a day die in this country because of gun violence, that at least over 36,000 deaths a year, and -- and it -- if I am hearing you correctly, that is -- is a point of concern to you that I am overexaggerating the deaths of over 100 people a day. Is that -- is that accurate? I apologize for -- [Crosstalk].
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): My concern is that you’re a medical student. You’re wearing a lab coat, so you’re representing yourself in some type of medical capacity using the word epidemic, and that -- and -- and the -- the rate of incidents that you’re talking about has decreased drastically over the last 20 years, so you know, that’s what I’m -- I’m questioning you about.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Can you please tell me what the source is of that information? I’m just curious because I -- I believe that I’ve seen slightly different data, so --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): The uniform -- [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Gentlemen, gentlemen, gentlemen, you’re talking over each other, you’re getting argumentative, and we’ve strayed far field of the bill. If you guys want to continue this conversation elsewhere that’s fine, but we’re gonna move along with what’s before us today.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. No further questions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): It’s the FBI uniform crime reports. I suggest you look them up.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you [Laughter], Representative.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: I was referring to the --
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Study -- [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Are there further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you for being with us.

CHRISTOPHER SCHENCK: Thank you. I appreciate the opportunity.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Next up will be Thomas Goddard, followed by Amanda Dettmer. Thomas Goddard? Going once, going twice, no. Amanda Dettmer. Amanda Dettmer?

DR. AMANDA DETTMER: Is it on? Okay. Good evening, Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and distinguished members of this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to let me speak with you today on the important issue of firearm safety. My name is Dr. Amanda Dettmer Arard. I’m from Hamden, Connecticut, and I’m an associate research scientist at the Yale Child Study Center. I’m here today on behalf of over 100 individual physicians, clinicians, and scientists at Yale who are experts in child behavioral, mental, and physical health. As such experts, we have an obligation to ensure the health and safety of Connecticut’s children. As adults, all of us in this room and across the state, whether parents or not, have an obligation to ensure that all children in Connecticut reach their full potential. By keeping children as safe as possible, we will succeed. We the 100+ signatories of this letter including the chairs of Yale Child Study Center and the Department of Pediatrics urge this committee to vote favorably for HB 7218, 7219, and
7223. As experts in child health, we know that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. We know that these bills will prevent children’s access to guns, which will help to cure gun violence in all its forms across the state. By prioritizing the safe storage of firearms in homes and vehicles, these bills will ensure that Connecticut’s children will be safer from accidental shootings and suicide attempts, as well banning guns without serial numbers and regulating so called DIY guns that are homemade or 3D printed.

Moreover, these bills will send a message to gun owners that adults frequently try to teach children that with rights come responsibilities. They must lock up their firearms or be held accountable. Not only will these bills keep Connecticut’s children safe, but they will establish Connecticut as the nation’s leader in prioritizing children’s safety. The evidence shows that in households where both firearms and ammunition are securely locked, children have an 85 percent lower risk of being unintentionally shot or kills. Can anyone imagine not passing legislation that would reduce children’s risk of injury or death by 85 percent while still preserving gun owner’s rights -- sorry -- while still preserving gun owner’s right to bear arms. Again, with rights, come responsibilities. These bills will enable all of us in Connecticut to realize our responsibility to keep children safe.

Introducing and passing HB 7218, 7219, and 7223, is in the public health interest. Policies do guide and change behavior, not in theory, but in practice, and they can save lives. Thank you.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thanks so much for being with us.

DR. AMANDA DETTMER: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I inadvertently skipped over Pina Violano. Violano?

PINA VIOLANO: Violano.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Violano.

PINA VIOLANO: Good evening. Thank you for remembering me. [Laughing].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Sorry about that.

PINA VIOLANO: That’s all right. Dear, Mr. Chairman and members of the joint committee on Judiciary. I thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 7218. My name is Pina Violano, and I’m a registered nurse and research scientist with a PhD in public health. I’m also an appointed member of the Connecticut Child Fatality Review Panel, and the American College of Surgeons’ Committee on Trauma, Injury Prevention, and Control Committee, and Firearms Safety Work Group. I am testifying as a private citizen who is a responsible firearm owner. With over 38 years-experience in critical care and emergency medicine, I know firsthand about the devastations that result from firearms that impact individuals, their families, and the community as a whole. I’ve had to deliver that message to families that their loved one has bee injured or worse -- died. A major part of my prevention and research efforts have focused on prevention of firearm injuries and death with the use of gun safety devices and safe storage.
practices, the use of gun buyback programs as a venue to dispose of unwanted firearms, firearm trainings, and what’s actually being taught. Helping gun store owners in the recognition of mental health symptoms and the prevention of selling of firearms, as well as other topics surrounding urban gun violence. Researchers like myself have found that having a firearm in the home is a risk factor for injuries and death, including suicides among adults and children alike. While firearm -- while household firearms can pose a danger to anyone, the inherent curiosity of children makes them particular susceptible to harm from unsecured firearms.

According to the latest data from the CDC, there’s approximately 85,000 individuals seen in emergency departments in the U.S. for firearm related injuries in 2015 with children under the age of 18 accounting for 6900 of those injuries. They also indicated that more than 36,000 firearm deaths resulted in 2015 with almost 1500 of those involving children. In addition, nearly two-thirds of all firearm related deaths in 2015 were suicide. From my own research, it’s shown that more than half of the participants are 55 percent who attended our gun buyback programs, did not purchase the firearm, acquiring it to inheritance, gift, or random find. Most of them had previous firearm trainings or were relinquishing the firearm for safety reasons. Those relinquishing the firearms for safety reasons were less likely to have purchased the firearms, less likely to have formal training, and less likely to keep the firearm locked. Fifty-three percent of those turning in a firearm reported at least one more firearm and requested safety devices, and at
least one of the cities that participated in this study, as many as 30 percent of the weapons that were used in gun criminal acts were burglarized from the homes of legal firearm owners that had failed to secure them properly. Additionally, what I found was that 13 percent that had someone in their home that had attempted suicide and 4 percent of those had actually completed suicide with the firearms that they turned in. Other -- my other colleagues have found also the same thing -- that presence of firearms were more likely in homes of suicide victims when compared with other attempts. Storing a firearm locked and unlocked was associated with increased suicide, and the mortality tripled in guns if they were [Bell] stored loaded and rises about 50 percent if they were stored unlocked.

For time here, I can give you more data if you’d like it, but I again support the House Bill 7218, and urge you to protect the health and well-being of everyone living in Connecticut.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

PINÁ VIOLANO: And, I thank you for your consideration.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much. Questions from the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. When doing your research, did you have any -- did you do any research about other countries like Canada?

PINÁ VIOLANO: Not Canada, but we’ve looked at gun buyback programs as a nation in Australia, and those were part of some of the evidenced-based reviews
that I’ve done as well, and those also have suggested the same similar findings that we have here.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So, you didn’t do any research regarding the suicide rate in Canada after they -- before and after they essentially banned handguns?

PINAVIOLANO: Not -- not particularly that one. I’m not aware of.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Would it surprise you to know that the suicide rate actually went up. Just people were using different means to kill themselves.

PINAVIOLANO: And, we do see that here, but if we’re talking specifically for firearms, I mean there are -- these are the numbers for -- for firearms, but there are other means that people have used suicide, and I do have those numbers in Connecticut if you’re interested in them and how they’re broken down.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

PINAVIOLANO: So, 18 percent of them in Connecticut here are suicide, and versus 75 percent being homicide.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I’m sorry. Say those numbers again.

PINAVIOLANO: Seventy -- excuse me. Seventy-seven percent of children over the years from ’01 -- January 2001 to December 31, and I believe it’s 2015, we had 126 deaths that we reviewed from the panel, and out of those firearm deaths 77 percent were homicide related and 18 percent were suicide
related, and 2 were accidental, and 3 were undetermined.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, but with -- with regard to suicides am I -- is it fair to say that suicides constitute the greatest portion of gun deaths in -- in the country and in Connecticut?

PINA VIOLANO: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, by --

PINA VIOLANO: By about two-thirds.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): By far; right?

PINA VIOLANO: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, are you familiar with other areas that make it more difficult to access firearms and the effect that it has on suicide rate where -- where the effect that is seen afterwards, whether it’s caused or not?

PINA VIOLANO: Related to storage of firearms, yes, and -- and locking devices as well.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): No. I -- I’m talking about just general access to firearms, so in places like Canada where they essentially banned private ownership with some exceptions that almost immediately the suicide rate actually went up, but people used other means. Did you do any investigation with regard to that?

PINA VIOLANO: The folks up in Harvard are experts in that, and I -- Cathy Barber is one of the researchers that is up there and has done extensive work around suicide in the whole Means Matters, so we know that in the time that folks are considering suicide those ten minutes are probably the most
critical piece of it, and access to the firearms seems to be one of the biggest cause and affect piece of that, so we know that if suicide -- excuse me -- if the firearm is locked and we can get those patients through that ten-minute period of time and calm them down, there are very few that actually go on and commit suicide with that. and, Cathy Barber is probably the most expert that I know with that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

PINA VIOLANO: And, I can share some of these articles if you like them? I can email them to you with data that I’ve published and other researchers have published.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): You’re welcome to. I mean if you’ve -- if you’ve already submitted in in part of your testimony or you can certainly leave it with the committee office.

PINA VIOLANO: Yeah, I can give you the actual one.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I -- I -- I certainly -- certainly appreciate you being here, and I hope we -- I hope we can all agree on this committee that there are far too many gun deaths no matter what you want to call it or no matter how you want to point it or the like, there’s -- there’s certainly far too many.

PINA VIOLANO: Absolutely.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Questions from the committee?

PINA VIOLANO: And, I think -- and I think one of the other things, sir, too just to add you know one of the ways to actually --
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): We’ve got to move on, ma’am. Thank you, though. Oh, question -- Representative Porter.

REP. PORTER (94TH): Not a question, but thank you, Mr. Chair. And, I just wanted to thank you for your patience today. I know you and the good medical student have been here for quite a while, and you’ve been quite patient, so I just wanted to thank you for that, and I also want to thank you for the tremendous work that you do around gun violence in my district, so.

PINO VIOLANO: Thank you.

REP. PORTER (94TH): Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, ma’am.

REP. PORTER (94TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair.


JONATHAN WALSH: Good evening. Just a couple of things I wanted to say before I start. First off, through you and to you, Chairman, but Representative Blumenthal, I wanted to thank you for asking a number of testimonials from people and -- and kind of getting their view of whether or not it infringed on the 2nd Amendment, so I think I’m just gonna go right down the list of bills for review, and give you some of my perspectives. I am not a constitutional scholar; however, Thomas Jefferson said, let us review the laws of the day and through the historical context let us draw upon the thought in which these bills were written, and instead of
trying to draw what words we might interpret from the text, instead, examine the spirit from which the 2nd Amendment and the constitution was written.

So, SB No. 60, AN ACT FOR CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT. It’s unconstitutional for the state to demand any lawful gun owner to have a carry permit seeing as your 2nd Amendment right is a God given privilege, not something that should be afforded to you by the state.

Moving along, SB No. 940, AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN PERSONS -- again, everybody should be authorized to carry handguns -- IN STATE PARKS AND STATE FORESTS. Well, that’s -- that should be allowed everywhere regardless. I’m surprised it’s even -- it’s coming up.

HB No. 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIRARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES. Redundant. I think you know if the constitution says shall not be infringed, then same would go for municipality as well.

Also, AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES. Assault weapons is a made-up term. Assault is an action. It’s not the designation of a rifle. Large capacity magazines. Again, made up designation. These are standard capacity magazines under which the rifles were actually designed to accept.

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME, No. HB 7218. I think that there’s a lot of common ground that can actually be gotten between gun owners and you know, the advocates for gun safety here. I think that all gun owners, you know,
we have a responsibility to make sure that we are locking up our weapons because even though you know everybody who should have a gun constitutionally would be considered the militia. In order to be part of the militia you had to be able bodies, which means sound of mind, and there are some people who it would be a concern to give guns to. I will concede that to you, so locking up and storing these guns safe I think is something we can all find common ground on.

AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS. Again, this is a term that is a) not even easily defined, and b) is -- is, again, it’s not easily interpretable to the layperson what a ghost gun even is, so. [Bell].

Finally, AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF A PISTOL OR REVOLVER IN A MOTOR VEHICLE. I, again, would defer to the same logic of the act concerning safe storage of firearms in the home. I think we can all agree we want people to be safer, so thank you.


SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you, Mr. Chair. And, thank you for being here to testify and for waiting today. I do appreciate it. I disagree with just about all of your testimony, but I want to expand upon the area in which you said there might be common ground, and that’s on the issue of safe storage, both in cars and also homes. Do you believe that it is constitutional because that seems to be the theme throughout your testimony? That it is constitutional to ask gun-owning individuals who have a child in the home -- somebody who’s under 18 to store it in a safe?
JONATHAN WALSH: Well, thanks for the question, Senator Haskell. Yeah, so it -- the constitutionality is a theme I guess you could point out because that’s the basis in which laws are written. That’s the power from which the statewrights their laws, so yeah, that’s quite a theme to notice. Yeah, so I do think that you know that the age restriction is a bit arbitrary. I mean people all mature at, you know, different times for different people, so it’s more of a -- a concern to make sure that we’re educating people properly, and I was stunned to hear some people say that we don’t have time for education in our schools. We don’t have the money for education in our schools. I’m sorry, but isn’t education how we avoid ignorance, and isn’t, you know, through ignorance the way that a lot of these kids are getting hurt?

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay, but you didn’t answer the question, and that’s --

JONATHAN WALSH: Sure.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I’ll try again not to be a politician God. [Laughing]. No. I -- I genuinely am asking do you believe it’s reasonable and constitutional to ask gun-owning individuals who have a child in their home to put that gun, whether it’s loaded with ammunition or not, into a safe?

JONATHAN WALSH: Well, that’s a great question. So, unfortunately, the question you’re posing to me doesn’t align within the spirit of the law, so you said whether it’s unloaded or not. They don’t give you an option of both, so I encourage you to reread the legislature.
SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Legislation, and I have red it. I’m asking do you --

JONATHAN WALSH: Well, then why would you designate between loaded and not -- [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Gentlemen, gentlemen, both of you.

JONATHAN WALSH: Thank you.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Sorry. Through you, Mr. Chair, I’m asking would you support any element of the legislation before us that would expand and close loopholes in our safe storage laws so that even guns that don’t have ammunition in them have to be stored safely because you said, surely, we can all agree whether we’re from the gun-owning community or the gun violence prevention community, and I would argue there are a lot of folks here who identify with both communities --

JONATHAN WALSH: Sure.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Whether you would object to that element of the legislation?

JONATHAN WALSH: I object flatly to any legislation which infringes upon the 2nd Amendment to which you said you were a supporter, but don’t seem to fully understand.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I don’t think you’ve answered the question, but I don’t think that we’re gonna get there, so thank you for your testimony. And, thank you, Mr. Chair.

JONATHAN WALSH: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you both. Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much
for your time. Peggy Shale [Phonetic], followed by Leslie Hyman. Peggy? Peggy Shale? No. Leslie Hyman. I’m gonna have Dawn Carafeno up next.

LESLE HYMAN: So, how does this work?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Just hit the button in front of you until the light turns red. The other one. There you go. Okay.

LESLE HYMAN: Here we go. Okay. Members of the Judiciary Committee who are still here, hello. My name is Leslie Hyman, and I’m here today as a mother, a social worker, and a very concerned resident of Guilford, Connecticut. There have been several instances in my life personally and professionally when I’ve been affected by gun violence. As a 13-year-old, a family friend and physician was murdered when a patient brought a gun into an interview. I spent the next year as a volunteer with Congressman Father Drinan in Boston as he attempted to create safe gun regulations. Shortly after my father died in 1994, my mother was robbed at gunpoint. That trauma compounded the loss of my father, and was made even worse because the robber took my father’s wedding band that my mother was wearing around her neck.

As a clinical social worker for the last 33 years, I’ve worked with several clients who’s lives have been nearly destroyed by gun violence. While I cannot go into detail about specific cases, they include murder, suicide, and children playing with a parent’s gun, resulting in the death of one of the children. But perhaps the greatest impact on my life was the death of Ethan Song on January 31, 2018. His death was avoidable, if not for the other negligence of the gun owner. It is hard to believe
that we have to legislate common sense and even harder to understand why making firearms inaccessible to children is even up for debate. Why is the right to be irresponsible more important than the safety of my children? I cannot comprehend the devastation that the Song family lives with every day, but I am privileged to call them my friends. Their children Evan and Emily are friends with my children.

On January 31, 2018, we were about to leave the house for a high school basketball game, when we heard on the news that a teen had been shot in Guilford. A picture of the house where the shooting occurred appear on the screen, and my daughter said she thought the house looked familiar. Moments later, I received a hysterical call from my son’s best friend. He was practically unintelligible. What I did manage to hear was this, “It was Ethan. Evan’s brother. I don’t know if he’s alive.” I hope to never feel that way again. I hope to never have to share with my children such devastating news. All of our lives were changed that day, and in their grief, Kristin and Mike Song have dedicated their lives to making sure this never happens again to a child. I would like to document my support for HB 7218, and I urge you to vote in favor of keeping our children safe. Thank you for your time.


DAWN CARAFENO: Thank you. To the members of the Judiciary Committee who are still here, thank you for this opportunity. I’m Dawn Carafeno, and I live
in Guilford. Seventeen months ago, my family moved from Missouri to Guilford so I can care for my father-in-law as he suffers with dementia and a litany of other health problems. I’m the mother of five, two grown boys still in Missouri, a daughter who is a junior at UCONN, an eight-year-old girl, and a seven-year-old boy. I’ve been a paralegal for 32 years, 10 years working for the state of Missouri and working for the Missouri Department of Health and Epidemiology, and also for the Department of -- oh my gosh, who did I work for? Anyway, governor’s office in Missouri. [Laughing]. It’s been a while. We’ve been here a long time. I’m now employed with the Guilford Public School District, and I serve as the secretary for the PTO Board at my kids’ elementary school. I also spent 12 years as a very developed member of the NRA. Both my adults sons are gun owners with an impressive or appalling cash to firearms -- depending how you look at it -- including three AR-15s. My family has always been a 2nd Amendment family. I was raised a rural Midwestern family. Guns are not foreign to me.

Last February 14, the Parkland shooting occurred at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School, and I like the country and a great deal of the world was horrified, saddened, and then very angry. My husband and I went on a date that Valentine’s Day for the first time in ages. You see, we are very old people, and we have very young children. We don’t get out much. We chose to not discuss the shooting with our young children because they were so little, but they went to dinner with their babysitter, and on the restaurant televisions and in the restaurant they heard people discussing it. They saw it. I didn’t know that my kids knew
anything about the shooting. Our town was still very thick in sorrow over the tragic shooting death of Ethan Song two weeks earlier.

My kids were new to Guilford schools, and they absorbed the fear that the teachers and students at their school expressed over the death of Ethan Song. My seven-year-old daughter told me she heard Ethan was dead from a kid at her school. Her big brother is named Ethan. She was inconsolable until I assured her that our Ethan was safe, and I phoned him so she could hear his voice. The following morning, our morning routine was terribly upset when my daughter refused to get dressed for school because she had light-up sneakers to wear. She told me that she was afraid that the lights in her shoes would cause her to be killed by a shooter at her school, and that her lights would notify the shooter to where she and her classmates were hiding as they had done in their drills that they had at school. She was afraid she would die, and she would be responsible for the death of all of her friends.

This was more than my brain could take as a mom. [Crying]. [Bell]. Sorry. I just want to support -- want to express my support for the safe storage law, HB 7218, and as a public\-school employee responsible for the safety of 350 students a day, I would welcome that. Thank you.

CHRIS BITEL: Oh, you got it. You got it. [Off mic conversing]. [Laughter]. But all righty. First time testifying, so go easy on me.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Take your time.

CHRIS BITEL: I should go easy on myself. I almost did a backflip. All right. Is this thing on? I just start? Okay. As we established, my name’s Chris Bitel. I’m from Middletown, Connecticut. I’m here just really to cover the safe storage and ghost guns, but before I get to that, I just wanted to make a comment real quick. You know, I’m pretty new to this whole thing of testifying and you know gun rights, and you know this never-ending battle, and one thing I really noticed, you know, I was around last year at the hearings and stuff, but there’s always a focus on gun violence and gun violence and gun violence, and -- and while gun looters are opponent and you know, the story we hear out of Guilford is beyond heartbreaking. I don’t have any children myself. I’ve got two nephews and a niece, and I can’t imagine, you know, anything like that happening, but you know, I did hear one thing I wanted to touch on. Earlier today, I forgot one of the Reps that was here, and the topic of England came up rather quickly, and he had mentioned, oh, we should be like England. We should be like Europe because they don’t have this gun violence problem. The problem with that is that what England did is that they focused on gun violence, and what they did is they essentially banned handguns in the country in 1996.

Now, just last year, that was an article a couple months ago in USA Today that knife attacks and overall murder in London had passed New York City
per capita for the first time in like decades. Now, I think New York had caught back up, but the point is they’re neck in neck. So, my point is if we just focus on gun violence and not the actual root problem of people being murdered and the actual real violence, is our communities being safer? Like, what is the point here? Is the point to make our communities safer or just pass a feel-good legislation that goes after the gun lobby? You know? That’s just something I wanted to comment on real quick.

As far as safe storage, I think it’s absolutely essential that there has to be an education program within the bill of safe storage. I can’t imagine this bill really being too effective without it. That’s the biggest thing with that, why I opposed that one. As far as ghost guns, this is -- this is got -- is ay this with respect. I’m not sure who wrote this bill. This has to be the most arduously written bill I’ve ever seen. It just it doesn’t -- it doesn’t define what exactly is a firearm and at what stage. Currently, the ATF defines a firearm as we have established that a pistol frame or a, you know, a rifle receiver is a firearm. The problem with the ghost gun bill is that it says now that 80 percent or anything with intent can become a firearm. Well, that means if I had a square piece of steel right here, and I have a finished frame right here that you would buy at a store with a background check, at what point from here to here does it become a firearm? This is established by the ATF, who’s got the tools and the -- the -- the information and the things that are necessary to establish this. The terms 80 percent comes in because where the trigger mechanism is there’s
nothing milled out. If you have an 80 percent frame or receiver you know you buy online or whatever the -- it’s impossible to put a barrel in it. It’s impossible to put a trigger in. It’s impossible to -- to put rails on, you know, if you’re making a GLOCK pistol for the -- the slide to go back and forth. There’s nothing about it that makes it a firearm. It’s just a piece of plastic or a piece of steel. Passing this bill won’t prevent anything like ghost guns. [Bell]. And, then the 17-4 PH thing is crazy, but that’s all I got. I’ll answer any questions if any --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Appreciate it, thanks. Questions?

CHRIS BITEL: Legislators have any questions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you for coming in. I’ve asked untold numbers of people this today.


REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Regarding the ghost gun bill --

CHRIS BITEL: Sure.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Do you know why -- do you know what a security exemplar is?

CHRIS BITEL: It is my understanding [laughing] -- it is my understanding -- I’m not big on vocabulary -- but it is my understanding that it is used as a metric in this case going back I believe it’s -- think the name is a magnetic firearms back in 1988, and it -- what a security exemplar is, is it’s using
the 3.7 ounces of 17-4 PH as a metric to measure the magnetism power of the “firearm.” So, the square of that bill was to bar a nonmetal detected -- I’m not sure if I’m saying that right -- a firearm that can go through a metal detector undetected. It’s to -- it’s to make that impossible, so the security exemplar as my understanding is to have a firearm completed -- not necessarily the frame, but an assembled firearm to have the magnetic power to be detected at any metal detector, you know, you would go through.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, it’s 10:30, and we’ve been going since 10 o’clock this morning, and you’re the first person who has any idea that’s testified as to what it is. Do you have any idea why somebody would want to imbed a security exemplar, which is supposed to be a separate piece of metal that’s run separately through a metal detector, and take that tool, that gauge and try to imbed it inside a gun?

CHRIS BITEL: Just to clarify the question, Representative Dubitsky. You’re asking me why in the bill that language is there? To imbed it in the frame?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Yeah, do you have any idea why -- why it would be put into a bill that we were going to vote on?

CHRIS BITEL: Oh. [Chuckle]. Again, I say this with respect. I don’t know who wrote it. It seems like whoever wrote the bill didn’t understand the concept of -- understand the concept that the security exemplar, and -- and it seems like they think it has to be -- they can’t distinguish between an assembled firearm and a completed frame. So, for
instance, a completed firearm of a GLOCK pistol let’s say, is a plastic polymer pistol. It’s mostly plastic pieces with the trigger and pins and what not, but when you put on the -- when you have the GLOCK fully assembled with the -- the slide on the top, all that steel in the slide, and the barrel, and everything else, and the slide they would pass -- I guess you would call it the test of the 17-4 PH magnetic power, and the only reason I could see why they put it in the bill is I know in the ATF federal guidelines of preventing, you know, an undetectable gun is it says that it has to be in an assembled firearm. The only thing I can think of is whoever wrote this specific raised bill for this legislature mixed up the two. It’s almost like someone copied and pasted like they’re doing a college paper at the last minute online, you know.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, all right. I appreciate your answer, and I -- I’m -- it’s dismaying to me that nobody else has been able to answer that question as least as well as you.

CHRIS BITEL: Thank you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I agree with you that it -- this appears to be a cut and paste job --

CHRIS BITEL: [Laughing].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Of statutes that don’t make any sense together.

CHRIS BITEL: I agree. It’s -- and -- and -- and -- I didn’t mean to interrupt. I was just gonna say. What’s concerning is that if it’s calling for imbedding of 17-4 PH into a GLOCK frame, so what about people who -- who have completed these frames? What about someone who’s planning to move to
Connecticut and may have one? It’s perfectly legal. I mean we’re not even talking about putting a serial number on it. We’re talking about -- even if you go through the process of putting a serial number on it, which it seems like that doesn’t even have a program set up for giving out serial numbers, but that’s another part of this bill that makes no sense. Even if you go through those avenues, it’s still -- it’s impossible to imbed that in the frame and what, it becomes an illegal firearm? It’s a Class C felony. That’s what a mandatory minimum of two years? That’s kind of crazy.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, fully assembled --

CHRIS BITEL: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Do you know approximately how much steel of one type or another is in a GLOCK pistol?

CHRIS BITEL: I can Google it. I don’t have that answer off the top of my head.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Is it fair to say it’s a couple of pounds?

CHRIS BITEL: Yes. Yes. Yeah, especially if you’re dealing with like a GLOCK 17, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Far more than -- than the small amount of stainless steel --

CHRIS BITEL: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): That the 3.7 ounces of steel?

CHRIS BITEL: Yes, and 17-4 PH is a stainless steel, so the magnetic power isn’t going to be as much as regular steel, yes.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. So -- so, a fully assembled pistol including the slide, the frame -- I mean -- I’m sorry. The slide, the barrel --

CHRIS BITEL: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): The springs --

CHRIS BITEL: Yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): All the -- the -- the metal trigger mechanism. That’s all far more magnetic --

CHRIS BITEL: Yes. Yeah.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, more detectible than a little piece of stainless steel?

CHRIS BITEL: Yes. Oh, yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Thank you. I appreciate it. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you so much for being with us.

CHRIS BITEL: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Arthur Daigle, followed by Michelle Garabedian.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Good evening. My name is Art Daigle. I reside in Plymouth, Connecticut. I’d like to take the opportunity to thank the members of the Judiciary Committee for allowing me to give my opinions and testify on several bills before you today. I’d like to voice my support and urge that you support SB 940, AN ACT CONCERNING PERSONS CARRYING HANDGUNS IN STATE PARKS AND FORESTS, HB 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES, and HB 5870, AN ACT CONCERNING THE
TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES. I request this committee strongly oppose SB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT, HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN A HOME, HB 7219, AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS, and HB 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING STORAGE OF PISTOLS AND REVOLVERS IN A MOTOR VEHICLE.

SB 60, show me your papers is what this bill’s pretty much gotten nicknamed. Without going into detail, it just opens the door for racial profiling and discrimination. I’ll skip over the storage laws and go right into the ghost gun bill.

After reading the language of this bill, I see many flaws. The federal government, namely the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms has definitive guidelines as to what a firearm is, and they have them for a reason. This bill is written so vaguely that it basically turns a scrap piece of 2 x 6 lumber into a firearm. I’m very familiar with the federal guidelines as I do this for a living and have for many years. This bill does not exempt firearms made prior to 1986 -- or 1968, excuse me. Several of which are highly collectible and were not required to have serial numbers. Engraving serial numbers on these firearms would not detract from their value. ATF is the federal governing body for serialization of firearms. Having a state agency keep records not only is in direct violation of the 1986 Firearms Owners Protection Act, but offers little help with tracking and tracing of firearms by ATF.

My professional fear is the state issued serial numbers will cause duplicate serial numbers and confusion between model designations and firearms
manufactured. Obviously, manufacturer of firearms is covered under federal law, and is a time-honored hobby and tradition. The section of this bill is directly taken from an ill-advised federal law that was wrote as a knee-jerk reaction to panic caused by anti-gunners’ lack of knowledge during the late 80s -- 1988. There was a misconception that a polymer frame GLOCK pistol could pass through a metal detector. The requirement for 3.7 ounces of 17-4 PH at the time was a calibration standard for metal detectors. Metal detector technology has advanced substantially since then. It’s gotten to the point where aluminum foil from a cigarette pack is enough to be detected, and that actually dates back to 1968 -- the 17-4 PH or the magnetometer. [Bell]. I don’t question the intelligence, the knowledge of the members of this committee, but I do think that material specifications for firearms are best -- better left to metal or just some engineers.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions for the committee? Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, sir. Based upon your testimony, am I to understand that you have some knowledge about serial numbers and firearms greater than let’s say myself?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Actually, I have -- for 25 years, I’ve worked at Colt Firearms, and I’m a product development engineer.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, Colt is an FFL. They are authorized by the federal government to manufacturer firearms.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, when Colt is going to manufacture a firearm, they apply to the ATF for the issuance of serial numbers; is that how it works?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct. We actually request a serial number prefix in block, and they actually issue the serial number range that we can use.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Do you know of any states that issue serial numbers for firearms?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: They do not.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, now this law that we’re looking at -- the euphemistically called the ghost gun bill, 7219, allows an FFL to build a ghost gun?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: In theory, yes. But, no. Federal law --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Would prevent that.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Would prevent that.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yes. So, an FFL is exempted from complying with this statute; however, if I have an FFL before I begin to manufacture a firearm, I have to be utilizing a serial number?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Yes. If you have a manufacturer’s FFL. There’s different levels of FFLs. If it is a Gun Control Act firearm, it has -- you have seven days from the time it’s completed to serialize it and register it with Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. If it’s a National Firearms Act weapon, you have 24 hours.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. You said there is different levels of FFL?
ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Do you know what those levels are?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Offhand, I don’t know the numbers, but there’s -- there’s manufacturers, retail sales, importers. There’s also special occupational tax stamps that go on top of that that allow you to manufacture stuff like National Firearms Act weapons, suppressors, machine guns.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, looking at the language before us -- and I don’t know if you have a copy of the language?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I didn’t think to grab --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I’ll read it to you. It’ll help you along. I’m looking at line 160. It’s on page 6 of 8. It says the provisions of this section shall not apply to the manufacturer or assembly of firearms by a federally licensed firearm manufacturer. So, am I to understand that’s the FFL manufacturing license? It’s not the importer?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: It’s not the importer, and it wouldn’t be a retail sale either.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, assuming that they are exempted, if I am not an FFL, are you aware, and I think you mentioned this -- how would I get a serial number presently?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: You could actually -- you could possibly ask ATF, but they typically don’t want to deal with nonmanufacturers and non-law enforcement.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, does the allow ATF to issue a serial number to one who is not an FFL manufacturer?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I honestly can’t answer that for ya. I only deal with the business aspects of it.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Now, potentially [Coughing], let’s say Connecticut establishes a system where I’m going to build a firearm, I go to the State Police, they issue a serial number, and -- and I build the firearm, and then I sell it to you, let’s say. Am I to understand that that’s a legal transfer, and it’s approved by the State Police, you know, through SLFU ‘cause it’s got a serial number? Am I to understand that’s a legal transfer?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: It should be, yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, now you move to a different state with that firearm. Is that problematic?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: It shouldn’t be.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: The only point where it would become problematic is if it was done in another state and this bill is enacted. If I moved here from Tennessee with a firearm that had been transacted that way, then yes it would be a problem because no other state to my knowledge aside from California, maybe -- I’m not sure where their ghost gun bill went -- but everybody pretty much uses the ATF standard.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, let me just -- I didn’t mean to go down the rabbit hole. Just trying to get information, and you’re the first one who has come
here before us here tonight who seems to have this information. So, a firearm is manufactured outside the state, I guess that would not have a serial number?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): It would be problematic because that person then came to Connecticut and is importing essentially that firearm without a serial number?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: In theory, and since they’re not the manufacturer of it, I don’t see a provision in the bill to add serial numbers in.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Well, I -- [Crosstalk].

ARTHUR DAIGLE: To petition the State Police for a serial number.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, I think the bill prevents -- and I might be wrong, and I’ve been looking at this all day, but the manufacturer or assembly of the firearm without the serial number, so once it’s already manufactured or assembled in a different state, it could be brought to Connecticut, I think, under this language; right?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: It’s possible. I struggled with interpreting. Knowing what the federal laws are, I struggled with interpreting the law.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: As written. The bill -- [Crosstalk].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well, ‘cause we heard a lot about preventing bad things with these firearms, and
I just -- I don’t even know that that would be prevented, but anyway. Okay. thank you, Mr. -- Thank you, sir, for your testimony.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, I just want to make sure I understand your testimony. So, is it your testimony that right now if you were to make a gun in your basement, in your garage, and you were to take it to ATF and say, I want a serial number put on this gun, that ATF would not actually issue a serial number?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: You know, I can’t answer that. I -- I know that in dealings as an individual ‘cause I also -- I started out doing this as a hobby and turned it into a career. That’s kind of why I’m so against it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, you never -- have you built a gun in your basement or your garage?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I have.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. And, you’ve never tried to get those guns serialized?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Actually, they don’t require serialization, so actually, I serialized them, and they are in fact registered with Department of Public Safety because -- [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): How do you do that? I don’t understand the process?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: For certain things -- like I’ve done an NFA item, and ATF gives you guidelines for a serial number, so I submitted the paperwork with a serial number based on their guidelines -- [Crosstalk].
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, you kind of pick the number yourself?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I did.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: And, usually, with fire -- with stuff like that because they’re tracking it and they’re designating whatever it is that you’re making as a model -- they associate -- one of their big issues with serial numbers is they’re associated to models.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right. But you’re just -- you’re just kind of assuming that that serial number’s never been issued to somebody else.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Right, and that’s why you can’t -- with -- with NFA items, you can’t make the firearm until you have the approved Form 1 back, and if there’s an issue with the serial number, they’ll decline the Form 1, and they’ll give you an explanation ‘cause I’ve actually had it done.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): But it’s your testimony that DESPP, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, that they shouldn’t be in the business of issuing serial numbers.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: It should be ATF.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. But we don’t know whether ATF will actually give you the serial number?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I don’t have that answer for you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.
ARTHUR DAIGLE: I know -- like I said, on the NFA stuff, I know on a Form 1, they won’t necessarily give you the serial number. They give you guidelines for coming up with your own serial number.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Usually, they like initials and at least four digits.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Are you aware that DESPP actually has not testified against this bill by requiring them to issue serial numbers. In fact, they’ve submitted testimony in support of the ghost gun bill?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Excuse me?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): They’ve testified -- they’ve submitted testimony in favor of this. They’re not opposed to issuing the serial numbers.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Okay.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): All right. Thank you. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Okay. I’m going to -- I’d like for you to explain something to me. You could -- because you seem to be the -- the person most knowledgeable in the manufacture of firearms that we’ve seen. So, in the definition, of -- of a firearm -- hold on. Let me just pull -- let me just find it. I apologize. The definition of firearm now -- well, under this bill -- well, currently, the definition is any sawed off shotgun, machine gun, rifle, shotgun, pistol, revolver, or other weapon whether loaded or unloaded
from which a shot may be discharged. Current statute.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): This bill would add onto that definition any unfinished “frame or lower receiver” as that term is defined in this section. Okay, so in addition to anything that goes bang, you’ve got unfinished frames and lower receivers that clearly do not, right, so in addition to completed firearms, you’ve got these unfinished parts that are now considered guns.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Now, then later there in the -- in the statute, it defines what a frame or lower receiver is, and it says that no -- and then later it says, no individual shall complete the manufacture or assembly of a firearm, without obtaining a unique serial number. So, if a -- if an unfinished frame or lower receiver is already a firearm, then at what point under this bill would you need to get a serial number for it?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I’m assuming in its raw state. Again, ATF has very specific guidelines on what a firearm is, and they’re determined by their Technologies branch. If you’ve ever dealt with the ATF auditing group, if they see something that’s in question, they just seize it, and they ship it down to Technologies, and Technologies makes a determination on whether or not it’s a firearm.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so --

ARTHUR DAIGLE: They’ve made the determination on the 80 percent receivers, that they are -- or the
less than 80 percent receivers, that they are not firearms.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so it’s your -- your interpretation of this that in its raw state is what you said, so that means block of aluminum?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so if -- if you are required to attach a serial number to a block of aluminum, how do you machine that into a functioning firearm without removing the serial number?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: It’s impossible, and it’s also a felony. It’s a federal felony. Once it’s serialized the serial number cannot be removed.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so -- so this bill doesn’t make any sense.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct. That’s why I’m here. I saw this, and -- I have other issues with this. If any of you lock your back door with a barrel bolt, that could be construed as firearm because I tell you what in five minutes I can turn it into one hell of a zipgun. This -- this is just way too broad.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): All right. Let me ask you about the -- the section about the 3.7 ounces of type 17-4 PH stainless steel. Are you familiar with the federal law that deals with security exemplars?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I am. Honestly, I did brush up onto it ahead of time. I did date it back to 1968, and it was never implemented until 1988, when the whole GLOCK panic started.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, what’s -- what’s the name of that statute?
ARThUR DAIGLE: I don’t have the statute.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

ARThUR DAIGLE: It’s non -- Nonmagnetic Firearms Act or --

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, and what is your understanding of what this 3.7 ounces of 17-4 PH stainless steel is?

ARThUR DAIGLE: It was at the time in 1968 the minimum amount that was reliably detectable by a magnetometer.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so the security exemplar, you said you’re familiar with that --

ARThUR DAIGLE: That was their standard.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, that’s a separate piece of metal?

ARThUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, that’s not something that’s imbedded into the gun; right?

ARThUR DAIGLE: They had originally talked about imbedding it, and I know we had actually worked on a -- on a program where we ha bent a wire into the frame that was over molded, but to the best of my knowledge, they never actually implemented imbedding it.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay, so in the existing federal statute, it’s a separate piece of stainless steel that’s shaped like a gun; right?

ARThUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, that piece of metal is run through a metal detector?
ARTHUR DAIGLE: Yes.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, the magnetometer is read, and that sets the baseline?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Yes, and again, like I said, that was from an old standard from 1968.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, then after that baseline is established, then you take whatever firearm you’ve just built and run it through, and it has to reach that level; right?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): So, you don’t actually take the piece of metal and --

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Jam it into the --

ARTHUR DAIGLE: The metal was a standard that the used to calibrate the machine.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Do you see another -- another person who was testifying earlier characterized this as a cut and paste job out of federal statute; would you agree with that?

ARTHUR DAIGLE: I would agree with that.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Well, I think I’ve run out of questions, and it’s getting late.

ARTHUR DAIGLE: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you very much. You’re appreciated. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I’m seeing none. Michelle Garabedian, followed by Jeffrey Moores.

MICHELLE GARABEDIAN: Good evening. I promise my intel won’t be as dramatic as the last, but Chairman Stafstrom, distinguished member of the joint committee on Judiciary, my name is Michelle Garabedian. I reside in Windham. Today, I am providing support and opposition of the bills today. SB 940, AN ACT CONCERNING CERTAIN PERSONS TO CARRY HANDGUNS IN THE STATE PARKS AND FORESTS. I am in support of that. House Bill 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES, and House Bill 5870, AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRANSFER OF WEAPONS AND ASSAULT MAGAZINES. What I really wanted to take the time to discuss -- and I did submit my testimony electronically this morning -- was House Bill 5227. We all know Connecticut already boasts some of the strictest gun laws in the country. Property owners can already ban you know carrying a firearm in their establishments, but I’m a real estate agent, and I have clients all over the state, and there are hundreds of attacks and deaths every year to real estate agents by criminals. In Ansonia, for example, this is a garter holster. I wear this almost all spring, every summer under my dress. I don’t wear a belt even though I do choose to open carry when I have that opportunity. It’s not necessarily always going to happen. If I wore my garter holster, I would be breaking the law in Ansonia. New London and New Britain, fortunately, they have those little nuances, and they were compromised. Ansonia is still one that does. So, my options are to leave my firearm in my car or to carry it, which would not be secure as I’m walking a
client through a home, or to just leave myself unprotected or put a belt on over my dress. Legal gun owners try so very hard. Fortunately, we have CDDL, who you know provides us information so that we can stay current on the laws, and we try so hard to follow every single law that there possibly is for 169 towns, and let’s dare say 100 of those municipalities decide to make their own laws. How are we ever going to know that? We’re setting ourselves up to literally become felons, and all we’re trying to do is protect ourselves, be legal. We are Connecticut legal, carry permit holders, whether it’s a pistol or rifle. I want to say that most legislators, you know, know half of the guns laws that are out there. You see by a lot of the proposed bills. They’re printing up things that are already passed. People went on SB 1160, oh, you know what got a lot of people to sway, they said the mental health issue. It never got addressed. It was from the 90s for education, never followed through.

So, I’m also going to testify today in opposition of SB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT, which was once upon a time House Bill 6200 [Bell] -- and that’s it. [Laughing].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you very much for being with us.

MICHELLE GARABEDIAN: You’re welcome.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Jeffrey Moores, and then Heather Colletti will be next.

JEFFREY MOORES: Good evening, members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Jeffrey Moores. I
am from Farmington, Connecticut. This ground has been fairly thoroughly trod, and I’ll see if I can’t add a few things. For the record, I support SB 940, HB 5227, HB 5870, and I’m opposed to SB 60, HB 7218, HB 7219, HB 7223.

SB 60, the carry permit, the bill is sort of pointless at this time. It was brought about originally when open carry became -- was novel. The police didn’t seem to understand that people didn’t have to show their carry permit, so when you got some fella that knew his rights and could get kind of shirty about it, it created a conflict. Since then, the police are aware of people’s rights, and it’s kind of toned it down, and the guys that like to make videos going into Walmart seem to have faded into the woodwork.

I’ll pass on the ghost guns, although I do have a little bit to add about that 17-4. The one that concerns me the most is 7223, storage of a handgun in a motor vehicle. It seems to be written with an attitude of one-size-fits-all, but it does not take into account FFLs who display at gun shows, and C&R licensees who also will do show and tells at various different meetings and that sort of thing. They will bring a tremendous number of guns. The Chair stated that everyone knows what a safe is. I don’t disagree with that, but I guess if you polled the room you would probably get 30 different ideas as to what a safe is. My idea of a safe is not something that would fit into a car, but then you would probably have a different idea of it. The problem with collectors and with dealers is they’re going to have a large number of guns, and they can’t just throw them into a little spring box. That has to be accommodated. I mean it’s not like they’re
careless. Usually, there's an awful lot of money there, so they put them in their car locked and alarmed, and they keep an eye on it, but the way this bill is written if they don't fit them in what hasn't really been defined as a safe, then they're committing a felony if they just take a bathroom break when they stop for gas. SB 940, carrying in state parks I think is a good idea. If you go hiking, particularly in the Simsbury area, your chance of encountering a bear are quite good, and an angry bear is a scary thing. It would be nice to have some form of insurance, not that you'd want to shoot the poor thing, but if it comes at you, you really have no options. That's all I really have to say unless there are questions.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Questions from the committee? I'm seeing none. Thank you very much for being with us. Heather Colletti, followed by Ralph Santos.

HEATHER COLLETTI: Thank you, distinguished members of the joint committee. My name is Heather Colletti from Lisbon, Connecticut. With three children of my own and three I help raise, I'm a very responsible gun owner, including educating my children at home, at the range, as well as reminder them to never talk about our guns outside our home because of a profiling they'd be victim of. However, I'm opposed to bill 7218. That bill would almost have had me killed a few weeks ago. My unlocked gun was hidden away in a place where I know where it is, and there was a man who was wreaking havoc through Norwich and Willimantic, and even in my small less than 2000 registered voter's town of Lisbon. [Sigh]. He was in my backyard within a quarter of a mile of my house. I was lucky I knew that. My house was
locked. He might have come in, and I was scared, even with my gun that I had. I was ready, and trust me to say I would have only shot if he was coming towards me because I know the law. Does this happen every day? Is there a crazy guy there? No. But it happened and if my gun was locked, I would have had to go get it, and at the time and place that it was locked in, could have cost me my life. Additionally, how is this going to get regulated? I worry that if I do end up shooting the guy that was trying to get something from my house, the only way that you can regulate that is to find out I killed him and didn’t have a safe locking up my gun. But then I’m in trouble for something when he was at fault.

I’m also testifying today in support of SB 940. My sister-in-law got stabbed nearly to death by a knife at a federal park in Maryland, but unless asked for further information, I think you’ll know where this goes.

I also support HB 5227, HB 5870, and I’m opposed to SB 60. I can talk a lot about why I shouldn’t have to show my permit I have to wear on my if I’m carrying my gun. I have my permit on me now, and I’m not allowed to carry my gun in here. This is what we do that’s leading the authorities to a lot of responsibility to ask for every person’s permit when they’re trained and smart enough to see danger. It’s an unnecessary bill.

Additionally, I’m opposed to HB No. 7219, HB 7223. This bill is a serious bill that has a lot of negative implications. I can speak more to this too, but I’m only allowed three minutes. For those who don’t carry, first, I’m sorry that there’s a
fear. Try thinking about those that do and why we carry. I carry a gun wherever I legally can for my safety and if my children are there, for their safety. If I have to lock my gun [Bell] -- sorry -- in my car -- I’ll talk quickly -- that means I have to unlock it. The person next to me in Target is gonna see me, they’re gonna freak out, they’re gonna notify police, then I have to show my permit, then the bad guy who’s in Target knows I’m there, goes to Home Depot, shoots up in there. These are the bad guys. These laws won’t help.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

HEATHER COLLETTI: I thank you for being here.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you for being here. Questions from the committee? Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Thank you for coming in. I know it’ been a very long night, but I thank you for coming from the lovely town of Lisbon, from my District, and I thank you very much. With regard to the carry in parks, my feeling -- and one of the reasons we put it up was that specifically a women like your -- I believe you said your sister.

HEATHER COLLETTI: Sister-in-law.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Your sister-in-law. If she were in need of a firearm to protect herself outside of the park and chose to avail herself of the park, maybe bring her kids there and had perhaps a restraining order or something, that she may need it in that park, especially since in the middle of some of our state forests you make a phone call if you have cell reception. You know, you call up the
police -- local or state police, and say -- and they say, okay, we’re on our way, where are you? Well, I’m near the big oak tree. You know, sometimes it’s a little hard to explain where you are even if they can track your cell phone. Is -- is your sisters incident something that you’re willing to share with us?

HEATHER COLLETTI: Absolutely.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): What happened in that instance?

HEATHER COLLETTI: Her husband was a -- he was handicapped, and he was sick, and so the nurse that was caring for him -- we’re all envisioning a woman. It was not. It was a man -- fell in love with her. When her husband died, he became obsessed with her, but not to the point where she was fearful because it wasn’t quite at that point, but he said I want to meet you at the park, let’s talk about this. She had no reason to think that he was going to kill her or try to -- I’m sorry -- she didn’t die, thankfully. So, she goes to the park, she didn’t carry a gun. She -- I don’t even know her position on guns. She goes to the park to talk to this guy and say, listen, you gotta stop. This is ridiculous. Her husband had died. I don’t know if I said that. Sorry, it’s late. He pulled a knife out an stabs her in the throat multiple, multiple, multiple times. In the middle of this federal park, and this is important that it’s federal, leaves her to die. Nobody’s around -- leaves her to die. I don’t know if her cell phone worked. I don’t even know if they had cell phones. This was like five years ago. I don’t know. I don’t know exactly. I do know that she was left to die. They caught him because she
knew who he was, luckily. He went to jail, and she had many, many, many years of recovering. We really thought -- actually, this was a while ago. It was more than five years. Sorry. but she had a lot of recovering to do. She still to this day cannot talk correctly. She still has to sleep in a special bed. All this other stuff that obviously a knife could do too. He could have shot her. He didn’t. He chose the knife.

So, my point to this is, this guy took a knife into a federal park. Yes, eventually he got caught. Luckily, she didn’t die, but he is actually out of jail now, so in turn, she also has to conceal who she is on Facebook. She has to change all her locks on her house. She actually had to move because this guy knew where she lives -- with a knife. If she had a gun, who knows what could happen. You can say, well, he could have stolen that and shot her. Sure. You can make up any scenario. But why are we trying to -- I guess my point is why are we trying to make more laws of places where if I go to a park with my kids, which we do; why would I even consider having it a law that you can’t bring a gun there? What is the point? What is the point of that law?

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I don’t know the answer to that.

HEATHER COLLETTI: Oh, yeah, sorry. I didn’t mean to ask you a question.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I thank you -- that’s why -- [Crosstalk].

HEATHER COLLETTI: I guess I was just -- [Crosstalk].
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): That’s why we’re -- we’re taking testimony on the -- on the law to -- on the bill to eliminate it, but I thank you very much for your time. I thank you for coming in from the great town of Lisbon.

HEATHER COLLETTI: Thank you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, thank you, Mr. Chair.


WALTER HAGEDON: Close. Thank you, members of the Judiciary Committee for staying late and listening to us tonight. I oppose Bill No. SB 60, HB 7218, HB 7219, HB 7323. I do support SB 940, HB 5227, and HB 5870. Just touch base a little bit on the other bills. SB 60, we’ve been here before [Chuckle], and it’s a bill that just, you know, it’s troubling on so many levels, that you know we shouldn’t even be talking about it.

But I did want to go over on one of the bills -- 7223, AN ACT CONCERNING STORAGE OF PISTOL IN A MOTOR VEHICLE. We do care about what happens to our guns. We spend a lot of money on them, and we do care about what happens to kids if they get stolen. We do lock them in our car, but sometimes, you know, we might be out and the wife says, hey, can you run over here at the mall, pick this up for me or whatever, you can’t bring in your gun, so you put it underneath your seat. You do lock your car, okay, to make sure you hide it and put it in, you know, to try to do with it, but now this bill would make -- if something did happen -- like they stole your car -- make me a felon, but I don’t hear anybody
talking about if the catch the person that stole the car with the gun that he did a mandatory sentence in prison. According to this OLR research report put out by the state of Connecticut, they released a lot of people with gun crimes, and that’s the part I think we should be concentrating on is keeping people in jail that are committing these crimes, not just letting them go. It’s just, you know, if anybody had seen this report, it’s OLR report 2007-R-0442, and it has all the stats in there about the state of Connecticut, and I think that’s what we should be concentrating. Let’s make five-year sentence for breaking into somebody’s car -- because we did lock it. We didn’t -- we didn’t like just leave it out on the dashboard for everybody to see, you know. That’s just common sense.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. And, I know there was a testimony earlier on that report, but appreciate you flagging it for us. questions from the committee? Representative Fishbein.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, sir. Thank you for your testimony. Do you have knowledge as to the restrictions upon police officers when they enter, let’s say, school grounds to pick up their child, what they’re supposed to do with their firearm?

WALTER HAGEDON: Actually, what police officers are supposed to do? Actually, no I don’t.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

WALTER HAGEDON: Not a police officer. I know what I’m supposed to do.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, in conjunction with 7223, what are you supposed to do presently?
WALTER HAGEDON: If I go to a school, I’m supposed to actually not take it onto school grounds, so I actually have to park my car around a corner, try locking it in my car whether it be under the seat right now, we can do, or put a lockbox in the car, and which people aren’t considered is a lot of these small cars you know there’s no room underneath the seat. And, where do I put a lockbox? You know, if I leave it in the backseat, everybody goes, oh, he’s got a gun safe here. Let’s smash the window and take the whole safe. There’s a lot of -- lot of things with the bill that just doesn’t make sense.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you for being with us.

WALTER HAGEDON: Thank you.


SCOTT WILCOX: Put my glasses on. It sucks getting old. You should pass a law about that. Good evening, gentlemen. Thank you so much -- our distinguished gentlemen from the Judiciary Committee. My name is Scott Wilcox. I’m from the town of Middletown, and I’m here to testify on my opposition and support for specific bills for the Judiciary Committee. I oppose SB No. 60, concerning presentation of a carry permit. The simple act that someone will be openly carrying a firearm, which is 100 percent legal in a state, but then open a person up to detention and questioning and demanding of papers from somebody, and regardless of what someone might say, this is never a simple three second
It sometimes takes 15 to 20 minutes ‘cause they’ll question you, they’ll run your gun -- conceal number, they’ll run your permit, so I should be able to walk freely amongst in this country anywhere unmolested. It’s kind of -- it’s definitely a violation of 4th Amendment right of illegal search and seizure. Not only that, but it actually opens the really vague language of you know reasonable suspicion that can be applied unequally simply based on somebody’s appearance or even -- or even based on a person’s race, it can be unequally applied, whether it be your Puerto Rican or African American or whatever. It can be unequally applied. Openly carrying a firearm is not reasonable suspicion of a crime. I may openly carry my firearm when I’m riding a motorcycle, so then a cop can pull me over to check my permit?

HB 7218, AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME. I oppose this bill. This bill is 100 percent unenforceable. You cannot enforce this. You can’t. I mean the only way to enforce this is to go house to house and check somebody’s firearms. It is 100 percent punitive in it’s nature. As a friend of the Song family said, please pass this law so the gun owners can be held accountable if their actions are careless, so basically, punishing gun owners for carelessly handling their firearms or storing them. I mean this doesn’t prevent anything. We already have a safe storage law in the state of Connecticut, and people -- children are still getting -- people are still safety storing their firearms. The only time this law comes into effect is after a tragedy has happened, so it hasn’t really prevented anything.
I support SB 940, AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN PERSONS TO CARRY A HANDGUN IN A STATE PARK, which also goes into the act of concerning 7223, safe storage in a motor vehicle. The only time my firearm is locked in my car is when I go into a useless gun-free zone like a state park or a school or a post office. I am forced to lock my gun in the car, and go to these places. By the simple act that I can’t carry a firearm in a state forest or a state park, if someone breaks into my car and steals my firearm, I am now a felon, by -- just by being a victim of a crime, it makes me now a felon, which is kind of messed up.

Oh, the SB -- I’m in favor of SB 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS FROM MUNICIPALITIES. I fully support this bill. I mean it’s hard enough being a gun owner, and trying to navigate the minefield of firearm limits from state-to-state without having a law degree. Having municipalities passing firearm ordinances, makes that minefield even murkier. [Bell]. I mean it’s going to be near impossible to carry a firearm in this state without violating some law or regulation, but I kind of guess that’s the point. Probably fewer than two percent of handguns and well under one percent of all guns will never be involved in a violent crime; thus, the problem of criminal gun violence is concentrated within a very small subset of gun owners indicating that gun control aimed at the general populace faces a serious needle in a haystack problem.

But the other things that -- [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.
SCOTT WILCOX: Is safe storage in the car is that over 2000 firearms are stolen from police vehicles between 2008 and 2017 -- 2000+ firearms have been stolen from police vehicles, but --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Thank you for your testimony. Questions from the committee? Representative Fishbein.

SCOTT WILCOX: Yes, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, sir, taking off on that HB 7223, are you aware of the requirements or the prohibition of a police officer to enter school grounds let’s say to pick up their child with their firearm?

SCOTT WILCOX: I thought police officers because they are able to -- were able to carry inside of schools.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, so you’re not aware that unless they’re called for emergency protection or they’re hired as an armed security force, that they are precluded from entering school grounds bearing firearm.

SCOTT WILCOX: I wasn’t aware of that.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, you had mentioned that 2000 firearms had been stolen from police vehicles.

SCOTT WILCOX: Yes, sir.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Over what period of time?


REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, that’s Connecticut?

SCOTT WILCOX: No. I think it’s nationally, sir.
REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, am I to understand that in those situations that more than likely the firearm was left unattended in the vehicle?

SCOTT WILCOX: Possibly, yeah. Well, yeah. ‘Cause someone walked by and just grabbed it like the people -- submachine gun had been taken, AR-15s have been taken, shotguns have been taken, and have been utilized -- and GLOCKS have been taken and utilized in crimes and murders.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. So, you know, I didn’t see any exemption in this bill for police officers.

SCOTT WILCOX: I didn’t either, but I’m sure -- I’m sure since they tend to do that police officers always seem to get an exemption. It’s creating a separate -- by doing that, you’re creating a separate class of citizen, basically.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I tend to agree, but we heard earlier, I think there was a question in exchange with I believe it was with the chairman that the console or the glove compartment wasn’t enough. I don’t know if a trunk would apply here. A safe is a safe, so -- [Crosstalk].

SCOTT WILCOX: Well, a safe -- the definition -- [Crosstalk].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Well -- [Crosstalk].

SCOTT WILCOX: The definition of a safe is kind of vague because a safe you can picture a big honking safe where it’s all dial locked or down to a little lockbox. If you have a compact car, there’s really no place to put my lockbox.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure. But I heard earlier today a safe was a safe, so I guess without the
exemption for police -- all police cars in the state of Connecticut would have to be outfitted with a safe is a safe.

SCOTT WILCOX: True.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): If there’s no exemption.

SCOTT WILCOX: That’s true.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. All right. Thank you.

SCOTT WILCOX: As far as a safe in a vehicle goes, I mean you -- you put a safe -- you put a lockbox in there and it’s either bolted to the floor ‘cause if not, it’s gonna get yanked out of that car, and your firearm is still stolen.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure. And, we don’t want even police firearms to get stolen.

SCOTT WILCOX: Well, the other thing is police have quite a few firearms in their vehicles. They have shotguns, they have semiautomatic rifles which can go fully auto, they have you know a whole number of firearms in their vehicles, so.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Sure. Police officers are allowed to possess while their on the force.

SCOTT WILCOX: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Whether on duty or not. Firearms that you and I can’t purchase.

SCOTT WILCOX: Correct.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): So, okay. Thank you.

SCOTT WILCOX: You’re welcome.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

SCOTT WILCOX: Yes, sir.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. Sir, would you -- and thank you for your testimony.

SCOTT WILCOX: You’re welcome.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): I appreciate your patience before this committee tonight.

SCOTT WILCOX: Well, thank you for being here this late. It’s a big job here. I mean I appreciate it.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): It’s part of the job. Would you agree that we -- that a law that imposed negative consequences after an action has been committed can still have a deterrent effect on future action?

SCOTT WILCOX: Well, when it comes to the safe storage of firearms, if the potential of your child getting a hold of the gun and killing themselves or somebody else isn’t enough of a deterrent, this law isn’t gonna do squat.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): But my gun owners at the very least be tempted to protect themselves against possibly liability by a law that says they will be held liable for not storing their gun in a safe?

SCOTT WILCOX: I have three boys ages 3, 10, and 13, okay. My firearms are always locked up. They have absolutely no access to them. I mean I look at my three-year-old son, and I can’t imagine something horrible happening to him. It just -- it wrenches my gut, and you know, I can’t imagine the pain and
suffering that the Song family went through when Ethan was killed by a firearm. It’s -- it’s horrible. I understand that, but honestly, if that -- if that image -- if that potential of a child or somebody getting a hold of your firearm ‘cause you aren’t -- you aren’t responsible enough to I don’t know safely store it and lock it away, then this law isn’t really going to change that because nothing is more horrible than the death of a child. You should not outlive your children. So, potential of like, oh, I might get in trouble if I don’t safely store my firearm or my kid might die. You know, priorities.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): But I certainly understand the sentiment, but while you may store your gun safely and perhaps the Song family strongly believes in gun safety, the issue as I understand it surrounding this tragedy was that Ethan was at the home of a gentleman who didn’t store his gun safely. He stored it legally because our laws might be insufficient at the moment, but it wasn’t --

SCOTT WILCOX: Okay.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Stored in a safe manner. So, don’t you think that in the absence of all parents acting responsibly, we might be able to pass a law that has a deterrent effect on future parents by saying that there will be a criminal liability for failing to act in that responsible way that you’ve said that you do?

SCOTT WILCOX: Most likely not. It may affect some people, but not everybody. It may -- it may you know a handful of people may go, oh, crap I have to store -- you know, it may override their fear of somebody else getting killed by their own firearm,
but I don’t think it’ll make a difference one way or another.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. I would argue a handful of people would be worth it, but just one final question, if I may, through you, Mr. Chair? Don’t many of our laws such as the prohibition on drunk driving or even homicide only kick into effect after a crime has been committed. Would you argue that those laws have no effect on public safety?

SCOTT WILCOX: Well, that’s kind of a broad question because drunk driving is interpreted different ways. I mean you can in the middle of winter if you come out of a bar and put your keys in the ignition to heat your car up and sit in the back sleep to sleep it off, you are still guilty of driving drunk, so I mean.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): With all due respect though, that’s -- that’s not really the purpose of the question. The purpose of the question -- [Crosstalk].

SCOTT WILCOX: I -- I understand the purpose of the question, but you’re saying does it prevent anything. No. because [Sigh] it happens -- [Crosstalk].

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): You would be comfortable eliminating our drunk driving statutes because they only go into effect after somebody’s committed the crime, so you don’t believe they have a deterrent effect on the other people who might consider driving drunk?

SCOTT WILCOX: None of the drunk driving laws deter people from drunk driving ‘cause we have thousands -- tens of thousands of people do it every year.
SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): You know there’s more people would do it if it weren’t illegal.

SCOTT WILCOX: More people would do it if it weren’t illegal? No.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay. I think we’ve -- [Crosstalk].

SCOTT WILCOX: Because here’s the thing -- here’s the thing. I mean again you talk about potentially hurting or killing somebody with your vehicle. I mean this -- it’s all about taking personal responsibility, but your trying to legislate this personal responsibility, okay. If somebody gets a hold of my firearm -- now what this safe storage law does, if I don’t store my firearm legally, if an accident happens, I am now a felon, so now you get -- so it’s Class D felony, which makes me go to jail for a year, so not only have I -- not only has my firearm caused the death of a child, which I will -- which will haunt me for the rest of my life, and punish me to no end, now you’ve broken up my family even more, possibly even a bread winner, you know, or whatever and suffering the family more to sending me to jail -- sending me to prison for a year. I mean it’s not a [Sigh] -- I don’t believe that, you know, making a law, making it a deterrent is going to change anybody’s behavior. It’s really not.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): But it has. Nationwide, we’ve seen a decrease in drunk driving incidents due to an increase in the penalties that have been put in place by state legislators against the crime of drunk driving, but I think that we just have a fundamental difference there, so.
SCOTT WILCOX: We do have a fundamental difference. We do have a fundamental difference, and I appreciate that, and I can see where you’re coming from. And, statistics are a fun thing. You can -- you can take any statistic and point it in any direction that you want. Like someone said, you know, we can pass the safe storage act, less people are getting their hands-on guns that are unsafely stored, but the two are actually correlated unless you really do an in-depth study. You’d have to say well deaths are going down because we passed this law.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Okay.

SCOTT WILCOX: You can say, well, we passed SB 1160, so now, we’re no longer getting assault rifles shooting at people in the state of Connecticut. The two aren’t actually mutually exclusive.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Well, thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you both. Thank you, sir. Appreciate your testimony. Michelle McBriar.

MICHELLE MCBRIAN: Good evening, everyone. Thank you for being here and giving me the chance to testify. My name’s Michelle McBriar, and I’m from Beacon Falls. I’m submitting my testimony today in support of SB 970, AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN PERSONS [Clearing throat[ -- excuse me --] TO CARRY HANDGUNS IN STATE PARKS AND STATE FORESTS. HB 5227, AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES, and HB 5870, AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND -- oh, excuse me [Clearing throat] -- LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES.
As stated above, I support several of the -- of these bills. I’m especially in support of SB 940. My home borders the Naugatuck State Forest. My husband, daughter, and I hike in the park on a regular basis. Watching from my back deck, we can see all forms of wildlife. We have bears. We have bobcats. We have deer. We have wolves and coyotes. They come down in the yard, and I can also watch them through the woods. When we’re up hiking, it would be really -- kind of put our mind at ease that I would be able to protect my daughter if that wildlife for any reason decided to attack, or a person for that matter, but more the wildlife. The wildlife belongs in the wild, and I’m happy to leave it there. However, if it chose to come after me, I should be able to protect myself in a forest the same way I can protect myself in my home and on the road.

So, that’s where I -- that’s my strong one on the support bills. That’s the one I feel strongest about. I oppose SB No. 60, HB No. 7218, HB No. 7219, and HB 7233 -- no 223. My bad. Again, for many reasons, I oppose these. All right. First of all, I’d like to see some statistics where if we pass these laws it would truly make any of us safer. Every year, I see what bills are being presented, and every year the one thing I never see is educating people about firearm safety. I’ve been shooting since I was a child. I’m an NRA firearm safety instructor for both pistol and rifle disciplines. I was taught as a child the importance of firearm safety and to be a responsible gun owner. When my daughter was old enough to comprehend the concept of firearm safety, I enrolled her in a
junior rifle club, so that she too could understand the responsibility of firearms and firearm safety.

Sarah Raskin testified earlier about a study that was done. It was a two-day study with children. I firmly believe longer term education, whether it be junior rifle clubs, whether it be [Bell] in school over time, you’ll get more out of it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

MICHELLE MCBRIAN: That’s it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Questions from the committee? I’m seeing none. Thank you for being here.

MICHELLE MCBRIAN: Doug.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, I actually don’t have a question. I just wanted to thank you for coming and thank you for staying this long. I -- I appreciate the work that you do, and thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, Representative. Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you for being here.

MICHELLE MCBRIAN: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Dana Petkaitis. I’ve got that one --

DANA PETKAITIS: Petkaitis.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Petkaitis. Sorry about that.
DANA PETKAITIS: I’m gonna read from a pre-typed one page. If I go maybe to four minutes, if you could possibly direct me. That is one page. I would appreciate it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Try -- try to keep to the three.

DANA PETKAITIS: I will. [Laughing]. Distinguished members of the committee, thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Dana Petkaitis. I’m a 20-year Veteran of the Hartford Police Department, having retired as a Lieutenant and Shift Commander in the Patrol Division. I am here to urge you to oppose one particular bill pending before this committee, specifically SB 60, AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATIN OF A CARRY PERMIT. Police already have all the authority and legal tools needed in order to maintain public safety while balancing the protection of individual liberties. Police have the ability to initiate consensual contacts and conversations with citizen without needing reasonable suspicion or probable cause. To go further and to detain and investigate a person such as what is being proposed requires the legal standard known as reasonable and articulable suspicion. Reasonable suspicion is defined by the Supreme Court as circumstances including one’s conduct that would lead a reasonable officer to believe that a crime has been -- is being or is about to be committed. The mere presence of a person acting peaceably while armed is in no way suggestive a crime might be occurring or that a person has no permit. Neither does a person driving a car suggest they might not have a license, nor does it justify an officer stopping a person just to check if they have a driver’s license. This
The proposal would eliminate and violate the constitutional requirement of reasonable articulable suspicion to conduct an investigative stop, detention as required by the landmark U.S. Supreme Court Case Terry v. Ohio. In that case, the officer’s actions to stop Mr. Terry were based upon his conduct and the totality of the circumstances. This proposed law would issue a broad license to police to go on a fishing expedition without any suspicious conduct or circumstances that actually suggest that a crime might be occurring. I would like to touch on a sensitive topic, and I hope I don’t offend anybody here. This bill would violate a citizen’s right to be free from governmental harassment for merely exercising one’s constitutionally protected right without suspicious behavior on their part. Additionally -- this is the touchy part -- additionally, please consider this hypothetical case. A minority citizen (i.e. -- we’ll say an African American man, a Hispanic man, or any -- any person of a minority) peaceably walking down the street on his way home from work wearing a holstered pistol on his waist. A white police officer approaches him and detains him, demanding to see his permit. Do you believe that citizen would possibly feel they were targeted because of their race while simply exercising his free rights? Are we going back to the 60s? Such a law as proposed could potentially open the door to abuse or the perception of abuse. Would you as legislators wish to be known as the people to enact such a controversial law into existence. This bill would further be an alleges to somebody publicly expressing a political opinion -- 1st Amendment -- then allowing police to target, detain, and investigate them in the hopes of finding that the
person had a warrant out for them. A situation would be punitive and would certainly have a chilling effect upon the exercise of one’s rights.

In short, this is bad law, and I urge you all to oppose this bill. I thank you very much for your time.


REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And, thank you very much for coming in. I certainly thank you for your service to the Department for all those years, and were you here earlier -- much, much earlier when the Bridgeport Police Chief was testifying?

DANA PETKAITIS: No, sir. I was not.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, if I might summarize. Hopefully, I summarize this testimony. Hopefully, don’t mischaracterize it. He appeared at least to me to indicate that because firearms are dangerous, he called them inherently dangerous, that there should be some type of exception that would allow a detention based on -- you know, despite the Terry v. Ohio, that there should be some sort of firearms exception. Would you -- what do you think about such a position if I am characterizing him correctly?

DANA PETKAITIS: I believe it’s an intrusion upon the 4th Amendment rights against unreasonable searches and seizures, and also an infringement on the 2nd Amendment.
REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. In your -- in your experience, now you were in Hartford Police Department?

DANA PETKAITIS: Yes, sir.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. In your experience, would -- would you say that you’d seen any type of conduct that would lead you to believe that this bill could open the door to abuse?

DANA PETKAITIS: Yes, sir. There was a young lady who testified earlier that made some statements about basically being a few bad apples in every population, and that would include occupations as well.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay.

DANA PETKAITIS: More importantly than that, is the mere perception. There’s already -- there’s already exist tension between minority communities and law enforcement. We see it on the news all the time, and this is one more situation that could easily be perceived even if an officer is 100 percent objective and fair in their dealings with someone. I can envision a -- a -- a person believing that having the perception that they were targeted simply because of the way they looked.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. There’s a fear that a number of us share. I appreciate your coming in, and -- and giving your views, and thank you for staying so late.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

DANA PETKAITIS: Thank you.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): I very much appreciate it.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: [Off mic] He was here, but he needed to leave.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Is he in the building or he left? Okay. Pat Hamble.

PAT HAMBLE: Hamble.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Hamble. I’m sorry.

PAT HAMBLE: Thanks for staying so late. You’re on my turf ‘cause I work nights, so I’m fresh. [Laughter].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): We started early though, so we’re -- we’re working a double today I think.

PAT HAMBLE: Anyway, thanks for having me. I have a few comments on safe storage. I’m a Veteran. I’m a father. I’m a husband, and I’m an average Joe. I don’t have any fancy initials after my name, but safe storage is something I struggle with constantly. I have a -- I have a pretty good firearm collection, and yet, the vast majority of them are locked up in a very, very strong safe that takes me quite a while to get into. That’s not the safe that I would go to if somebody was breaking into my house, so Mr. Blumenthal, you were talking earlier about biometric safes. I’ve explored that. I have a couple of them that cannot be trusted. They work 90 percent of the time. Ninety percent is not good enough to be the safe that I would go to if somebody was breaking into the house, and more importantly if somebody was -- if I was at work and
somebody was breaking into the house, and it was up to my wife. In a stressful situation, you always -- you don’t rise to the occasion. You actually fall to your -- to your worst -- to your worst training, right, so imagine trying to fumble with a combination or a key or a biometric safe all the while somebody’s rattling your front door. It’s very, very difficult. All I’m asking for is if you’re going to craft a good safe storage law, please explore the technology that’s out there and the pros and cons, and realize that the safer that a safe is, the harder that it is to get into.

Kind of goes along with the vehicle storage as well. I’m challenged with my vehicle. the boxes that would probably meet the safe storage act actually don’t meet my standard of firearm storage, and the modern vehicle there’s just very few places to actually hide or secure a firearm in a -- in a modern vehicle today, and it’s something that I still wrestle with.

On the topic of education, our kids face challenges that we didn’t face when I was growing up. I grew up in a house full of firearms. My education was -- my dad actually put the hunting rifles above the mantle, and any damage that those guns could do in comparison to what my dad would do if we got caught messing with them, and it worked pretty good 50 years ago. Today, kids -- we like to educate them on the dangers of opioids, the dangers of texting while driving, I think we should probably educate them on firearm safety as well.

The other act I wanted to speak to was the ghost gun act or the ghost gun bill, and I oppose it from a different perspective. If -- if you’re familiar
with the whole ghost gun issue [Bell] -- sorry about that. Cody Wilson ended up winning his case based on 1st Amendment issues, and I think the -- let me say this. You’ve probably all heard of the anarchist cookbook. It’s been available for 40 years. It teaches you how to build a bomb. You could probably download it in the time that it took me to do my testimony, and yet, I’m not sitting in a room full of unabombers. It’s because I first and foremost trust my fellow men, and so if you’re given a choice between a free but dangerous society and a safe but burdened society, I’ll choose free and dangerous every single time. Thank you very much.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. Sir, just super quickly on the --

PAT HAMBLE: Yes, sir.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): On the safe storage issue. You know, I -- I completely understand your perspective and the perspective of many other folks who have come in here today and have said, we’re law-abiding gun owners, you know, I do everything I can --

PAT HAMBLE: Yes, sir.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): To keep my guns out of the hands of -- of folks who shouldn’t have them. I think the concern a lot of folks have who testified earlier today, and I continue to have as a parent is not so much what’s happening in my house, but what’s happening when my kid goes someplace else, and you know when we legislate, we legislate for sort of the lowest bar, right. I mean there’s no -- there’s never any prohibition against exceeding it and saying, well the safe storage requirements you’ve
laid out in this legislation don’t meet my own internal standards --

PAT HAMBLE: Right.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): So, I’m gonna strive for something more and the like, you know, and I guess, you know, if I kind of heard your testimony correct and -- and I’m reading your body language right, I think, you know, where -- where is -- where is the minimum threshold?

PAT HAMBLE: [Laughing].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Where is -- where is --

PAT HAMBLE: If I had that answer, I’d be manufacturing safes and not doing what I do for a living. I don’t have a good answer for you, sir. I’m just asking for you -- sometimes I get the feeling that people that maybe your crafting the laws are not as knowledgeable about the topic as maybe that they should be -- at least that’s how a lot of gun owners feel. All I’m asking for is that you’re gonna craft a -- a requirement to have a safe -- I keep hearing safe is a safe, but really it’s not. Educate yourself on what’s out there and the pros and cons of all the technology.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Well, and that’s why we -- that’s why we sit here and we listen to testimony.

PAT HAMBLE: Yeah.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I mean the bills we heard today are seven of the hundred and forty or so --

PAT HAMBLE: Sure.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): That are gonna come through this committee. I mean we were -- we were hear
Friday on immigration bills. We are here today on gun bills. We’ll be back on Friday on claims brought before the state of Connecticut.

PAT HAMBLE: I do not envy you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, you know we -- we shift gears quickly, and I mean that’s why it’s important to hear -- hear the feedback on that, and that’s why I asked the question of --

PAT HAMBLE: Yes, sir.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Where is the minimum thresholds? But I appreciate -- I appreciate your candor and response on that. questions from the committee? And, thank you for your service.

PAT HAMBLE: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Representative Blumenthal.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you for your testimony. Thank you, Mr. Chair. So, first of all, which service were you in?

PAT HAMBLE: U.S. Navy.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Okay. Well, nobody’s perfect. I was a Marine, so. [Laughter].

PAT HAMBLE: You don’t even want me to go there.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): [Laughing]. Nobody wants us to go there.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Gentlemen, I’ll ask you not to bicker and stay with the bills before us.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Well, thank you for testifying. I think just responding to the point you made ‘cause you addressed me. I think one of
the things I wanted to explore, and I think one of the things that was kind of behind how this bill was written is we want to -- I think the idea is the bill wants to give gun owners -- responsible gun owners the flexibility to choose a safe that they feel meets their needs --

PAT HAMBLE: Right.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): And, not dictate to them the exact safe that they have to pick because they may have different priorities, but set kind of a bare minimum of security, and then they can figure out which version is best for them. So, you sound like you know a lot about different kinds of safes and have strong preferences, and I don’t think the bill would interfere with that in any way, and the idea would be that people who are not so responsible by nature would feel the inclination knowing that there are criminal penalties out there --

PAT HAMBLE: Right.

REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): To pick something, and that that would make, you know, children who were at their house but also or at somebody else’s house marginally safer, and prevent a significant amount of gun deaths, so again, I think -- I appreciate your testimony and your perspective, so.

PAT HAMBLE: And, this is a conversation that we have in our house about my responsibility to say for an example my daughter’s friends -- should I notify their parents in case they have strong feelings against that? do I want to know as a parent when my kid goes to a house where there may be guns in the house? Again, I don’t have answers, but it is a topic of discussion quite frequently.
REP. BLUMENTHAL (147TH): Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

PAT HAMBLE: Thank you.


PAT HAMBLE: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, sir. Joseph Sastre, and then I have John Krips [Phonetic] after that, and then that will conclude our sign-up list.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Good evening, to the members of the panel. Thanks for staying late for me. I originally intended to come in today to talk about Senate Bill 60, simply to point out that it probably runs a foul of 4th Amendment law in regards to Hiibel v. 6th Judicial District of Nevada because what the state would essentially be doing would be creating a stop and ID law. Only six of the states have those laws, and not all of those states -- I can’t recall which ones they are off the top of my head -- they don’t all have the state Constitution that Connecticut does, so you’d be facing an even higher challenge under our state’s Constitution, but I came in this morning expecting that this new Bill 60 was going to just be a reiteration of 5780, I think it was a couple of years ago, and I saw Chief Perez. I walked in, in the middle of his testimony about some occurrence that had happened down in Bridgeport, and I realized that he was once again dragging my client through the mud, and that being Dontrell Brown. This is now the second or third time that I’ve sat through Chief Perez telling the story about what happened in a Subway restaurant, and the story just keeps getting more and more
outlandish, so I felt it was necessary to come back and speak up for my client, and let the panel know that as Chief Perez suggested maybe the panel ought to hear from the sandwich shop owner because there was no call to the police made. Everybody knows that Mr. Brown was simply standing in line at a sandwich shop, and a police officer walked in to get his own lunch, noticed a bulge under his shirt, engaged him in the conversation that we all know about, and the rest is history. He wasn’t open carry. He simply saw an imprint. He wasn’t there to be an activist. There was no call to the police. Nobody was alarmed.

I just think that if -- if the police can’t come in now four years later with a better example of why they need this law, SB 60, then it just proves the point that they don’t need it. They didn’t need it for Mr. Brown in February 2016. They didn’t need it again in June 2016 when they arrested him in violation of the law, and they don’t need it now. If they did need it, they’d have come in with fresh stories of, oh, we could have thwarted this bank robbery or this school shooting or this home invasion, but they can’t. The fact that they’re still trying to -- to tell that story as the reason that they need this panel to pass this law for them [Bell] proves that -- that the don’t need it.

Representative Dubitsky, I can take a swing at the question that you posed to the -- to the police officer a couple --

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Why don’t we -- we’re at the three minutes, let’s see if he takes the bait for ya. [Laughter]. Representative Dubitsky.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Take a swing.
JOSEPH SASTRE: I think that your question was whether or not there’s a legitimate grounds for exceptions simply because the firearm’s an inherently dangerous object. Whether or not it is, is up for debate, but I think that the question would have been settled with Cruise v. Delaware, which is Supreme Court precedent that suggests that the police can’t simply pull people over just to make sure that their car is registered and that their driver’s license is current, and the fact of the matter is that there might be a lot of gun deaths in America, but there’s a hell of a lot more vehicular deaths. And, driving a car is not a protected Constitutional right, except to the extent maybe that you can paint it as interstate travel, so the fact would be that you would still be turning a Constitutionally protected activity into reasonable and articulable suspicion of a crime, which would violate Hiible, again, so I don’t think that the exception would work, particularly since the numbers as you had suggested -- the numbers that are available through the FBI.

They just don’t bear it out, so there can be no exception there. If it is a novel approach, it’s surely one that would fail, but so far there’s not a high court in the whole nation that’s allowed the making of the constitutionally protected activity into the basis of reasonable and articulable suspicion for Terry purposes, and it also is important to point out that Terry doesn’t allow for the stopping of an individual in order for them to identify themselves without their papers or anything more. It simply allows the police to hold them in place while they investigate. Terry was a case where a couple of guys were pacing back and forth,
clearing intending to pull off an armed robbery. Police pull on the side, pat them down, find a couple of guns. They end up going to jail for the guns, not for the -- not for the robbery because Terry, of course, invents the frisk -- the protective frisk, so they weren’t pulled aside to say, who are you. My names’ Mr. Terry. No. That’s not it. they were simply held in place while the police investigated around them. So, a stop and ID law is essentially what SB 60 is, and it will fail.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Did you hear the testimony of the Bridgeport Chief?

JOSEPH SASTRE: I did except for maybe the first few minutes. I walked in, in the middle of while he was talking about the Subway incident.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, he indicated that -- now, I’m sorry. What is your name, again?

JOSEPH SASTRE: Joseph Sastre.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, your client is whom?

JOSEPH SASTRE: Dontrell Brown.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. And, Dontrell Brown was the individual who was in the -- in the You Tube videos. He was carrying in the Subway shop?

JOSEPH SASTRE: That’s right.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): And, was approached by police officers?

JOSEPH SASTRE: That is correct.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. The chief indicated that he as open carrying; is that not true?
JOSEPH SASTRE: It isn’t. He -- it was under a -- like a t-shirt, so to the extent the police officer recognized a bulge in his t-shirt. If that’s to be called open carry, which is another can of worms that SB 60 is going to -- to open. So, what is open carry? The wind blows my shirt up. Am I know open carry? If I have an imprint in my shirt, is that open carrying or does it have to be prominently displayed on the outside or a rifle over my shoulder? But no, Mr. -- Mr. Brown had his -- had his gun underneath his -- underneath his shirt -- [Crosstalk].

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, as I recall, it was Senator Looney earlier who was asked by Representative Fishbein about printing, and Senator Looney at least indicated -- if my memory serves -- that -- that printing would not prompt an approach by the police officer. You seem to be indicating that in the -- the Subway sandwich case that is indeed what prompted the encounter. Am I interpreting that correctly?

JOSEPH SASTRE: No. I think that you have that correct. I thin that anybody suggests that simply wearing a firearm underneath your shirt as long as it’s imprinting will not be treated as open carrying I think is a pipedream. If you -- what if you’re wearing a clear shirt -- you know, you’re wearing a mesh shirt, you know, it’s going to show. If you’re just wearing a t-shirt it’s going to show. If you have -- if you have a t-shirt on and you squat down to pick up something off of the bottom shelf at a supermarket, your shirt might lift up a little bit, so I think that the -- you know, it would be called open carrying if -- if a person standing by casually, maybe even gawking at you could perceive
that you are carrying your gun. I think that in the -- in the eyes of a law enforcement officer, it’s going to be called open carry. You’re gonna have to go through some lengths to -- to truly conceal.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Now, the Bridgeport Chief also indicated that the clerk or the -- the person behind the counter at Subway had phoned in a complaint about this -- about your client because he was afraid that your client was going to rob the place. Is any of that true?

JOSEPH SASTRE: I heard that this morning, and I checked with a friend of mine who was in the room. He said, that’s the first he remembers hearing any claim of that sort, and I actually was able to spend a little bit of time back at my office in the meantime. I looked up the news reports again, and they said the same thing as I remembered it. That it was a bulge, the police officer walked in. Mr. Brown wasn’t arrested. There was really nothing to represent him there, but six months later he was arrested, which prompted me to kind of rereview, so I -- I wouldn’t -- I wouldn’t ever call somebody a liar, but I would say that, you know, maybe Mr. Perez thinks that’s true and maybe there’s an outside chance that it is true, but it’s certainly the first time in four years that I’ve heard it. I certainly do not think that it’s true that the clerk or anybody at the Subway restaurant called the police. I thin that if one watches the video what they see is near the end the police sort of fish for the -- for the sandwich shop worker to say that he doesn’t want him there, but watch enough 1st Amendment on it -- videos, and you see that the police do this, excuse me, sir, is this guy alarming you? It was that sort of thing, so it’s clearly --
it wasn’t -- it wasn’t a call that initiated the confrontation. It was simply a police officer go into a Subway shop to get a sandwich when the guy in front of him was waiting to buy a cookie and has a gun that was visible through his -- through his shirt by the imprinting.

REP. DUBITSKY (47TH): Okay. Well, that certainly sheds a completely different light on the situation. I appreciate your coming in, and thank you, Mr. Chairman.


REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Good evening, sir. You keep on referring to Mr. Brown is your client, and I’m just trying to -- in what capacity? Are you a lawyer, or?

JOSEPH SASTRE: Yes.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Yeah, I’m his criminal defense lawyer. I represented him about six months later. He was arrested, and in that incident, he was arrested outside of the Bridgeport Golden Hill Courthouse.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

JOSEPH SASTRE: On the sidewalk there.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Not as a result of the Subway incident, it was something else?

JOSEPH SASTRE: Well, you know [Sigh], it depends what you want to make of it. You know, by six months after that Subway incident, I couldn’t find a police officer in the state I didn’t think that
didn’t know who Dontrell Brown was, but he seemed to find a one in Bridgeport who didn’t know who he was and pulls the I’m demanding now to see your -- your permit, and Mr. Brown once again says, I don’t have to show you my permit. I’m not doing anything wrong, and he says, I want to -- I’m gonna tell you one more time. If you don’t show it to me, I’m going to arrest you, and he stuck to his gun on that one and was arrested. You know, it should be said that after that the Bridgeport Police reported all kinds of outlandish things to the Connecticut Post about my client and his conduct at the -- at the courthouse. My client’s conduct was videotaped, and in the Connecticut Post you’ll read, “He brought guns to the courthouse, lays them down on the sidewalk, and then tries to walk into the courthouse without them.” In fact, Chief Perez is quoted as saying, “It was crazy.” He wasn’t even there. He adopts this outlandish story, repeats it to the -- to the Connecticut Post, and then two years later, I think I’m gonna come in here and he’s going to be telling a new story about a new gunman that they -- that they intervene with, and he’s telling the same story, but with -- but with new facts that have never been told before.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): If I want to find ‘cause now we have two diversely different testimonies, and I always -- I always wonder why people aren’t put under oath quite frankly before the testify before our committee for the most part. If I want to find this video, what would I look on You Tube? Dontrell Brown?

JOSEPH SASTRE: Yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.
JOSEPH SASTRE: I went back to my office. I simply Google searched Dontrell Brown Subway Bridgeport, and I think a Fox link came up right away. I mean there’s still --

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

JOSEPH SASTRE: There’s plenty of them.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, then you mentioned the Hiibel case.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Hiibel.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, how do I spell that?

JOSEPH SASTRE: H-I-I-B-E-L versus -- it’s really late for me.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Out of Arizona, you said?


REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay, and then as a -- as a lawyer, are you aware of the case of Scott Lazurek in -- in West Haven?

JOSEPH SASTRE: He was the one -- was he arrested on the boardwalk?

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yes.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Yeah, vaguely. Yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay. And, in that case, although they detained him, they arrested him for obstruction of justice, that they found the permit within his affects, so he was a permitted person established, but they attempted to go forward on the charges. Are you aware of that?
JOSEPH SASTRE: Yeah, that’s -- that’s how I remember it, yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Okay.

JOSEPH SASTRE: And, there were -- I think they were dropped, and he also got his permit and guns back, I think.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Yeah, well, I sat on the Board of Firearms.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Oh, okay. [Laughing].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): I heard that case, yeah.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Yeah.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, in that case, I asked the police officers if anybody had called and expressed any alarm or anything like that.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Okay.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): And, there answer was in the negative, so you know, the targeting, the profile is certainly something that exempts it.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Well, you know, when it comes to breach of peace, they say, you know, it can’t be a police officer’s peace that’s breached, so you know, the police shouldn’t either be around to just go around and just become alarmed at anything that’s convenient for them to become alarmed at.

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Understood. Thank you.

JOSEPH SASTRE: And, that’s exactly what -- [Crosstalk].

REP. FISHBEIN (90TH): Thank you, sir. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you both.

JOSEPH SASTRE: Thank you all.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Further questions? I’m seeing none. Thank you. John Krips [Phonetic]. John Krips? I’m hearing none. That’s the last name on our list unless there’s anybody else in the public? I will declare this public hearing --

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: We have one more, I think.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yes, sir.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: I’m sorry. My name is Andrea Sandomierz. I’m from Stamford.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: I put my testimony in.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Come on up. Come on up. Just make sure you state your name and spell it clearly so that the administrator can take it down.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: Hi. My name is Andrea Sandomierz, and I live in Stamford, Connecticut.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Spell -- spell the last name for me, sir.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: May I give driving license? It’s gonna be faster, easier?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Sure.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: [Laughing]. I’m sorry. [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Pulls out his driver’s license --

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: Yeah.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): And, not a gun permit.
[Laughter].

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: No. I do have gun permit.


ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: I can present mine.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Oh, I’m sorry. Go ahead, sir.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: Okay. I -- okay, basically, good evening to everybody and to the members of the joint committee. Basically, I opposed -- okay, at the beginning I would say I’m sorry. If you don’t understand something I’m saying that might be my fault because English is my second language. I’m immigrant. I came from the communist country of Poland -- it used to be, not anymore -- and for me, the 2nd Amendment is the most important Amendment in the -- in the Constitution of the United States. I will explain why if you ask me. I don’t want to waste my time for that right now.

Now, I oppose -- I oppose SB 60, and concerning the presentation of the carrying permit. I will not spend any time on that because I believe so the looking up ID explain everything very well. I just would like to add something else. For many people like my father, he has few heart surgery, and he was carrying the device on his -- on the right side. It was medical device. It looked like a holster of the gun. When he covered it with the jacket, it looked like he had a gun. Even I make a joke once like, oh, when did you get your permit? And, he said, well, I don’t have a permit, and he even asked me like hm do you think I might be a problem, I be stopped by the police? And, I said, no, because the
police cannot ask you. It was a few years ago. Like now, what happened if somebody like my father is walking on the street and the police officer approached him and asked me for a pistol permit or ask him if he carry firearms, and that’s personal answer. I’m sorry, officer, I don’t carry firearms. What the police officer is going to do next? Search him? Arrest him? That person has serious medical condition. I would like to -- I would like to know what -- what the police officer is going to do next, is going to let him go? Is going to let that person go without more explanation or is going to ask him to search him? The police officer has a right to search a person because -- because of no reason. Do you understand what I’m saying?

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Yes, sir, but this is a public hearing. You can address the comments -- [Crosstalk].

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: Okay. No. I’m sorry. I’m sorry. I just I’m not sure if -- okay. You understand what I’m -- [Crosstalk].

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): It’s okay. It’s okay. I think -- I think we understand the point you’re trying to make.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: Yeah, you understand. Basically, that somebody’s carrying medical device, can be mistaken by the police officer that it be a gun.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Right. Right.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: And, why that person should be bothered? Okay, I -- oh, I’m sorry. I oppose HB 7212, concerning ghost guns. I will not go deeply in that because it was explained. AN ACT CONCERNING
THE STORAGE OF THE PISTOL OR REVOLVER IN A MOTOR VEHICLE. I would just like to add something that many people -- [Bell]. All the burglars or robbers, they observe you or observe your house before they do any kind of action. Now, if they see that you’re doing something in your car like locking something, it means that there’s gonna be something valuable.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Sir, if you could just -- that was the bell. If you could just wrap it up, just concluding thought if you have it.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: Oh, okay. And, okay, but -- I support the -- the act that lets people to carry handguns in the state parks and forest.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay.

ANDREA SANDOMIERZ: There is a small group of people that -- that can do it. The (inaudible - 13:56:01) can do it. If you would like to know why, I will explain, but you will have to ask me a question.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay, thank you. Questions from the committee? Representative Dubitsky. No. okay. Thank you, sir. Well, I think we have at least two folks, so folks are gonna testify. If you could just do me a favor. Come on up and check in with the administrator so she’s got your name, and then we’ll take you in order after that. And, sir, if you could just identify yourself into the microphone.

RADEK KOLAKOWSKI: Yes. Good evening, everybody. Thank you for giving me the chance to say something. I also came from Poland 23 years ago. I’m sorry about my language. It’s not perfect. I never went to school in America ‘cause I never had the time.
REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Could you just us -- give us your name?


REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Okay. Thank you.

RADEK KOLAKOWSKI: Okay. The reason I didn’t have the chance because I’m the father of eight children, so I bow my head to all women who got four to and spoke before me, and I believe so those bills are to protect the people who live in Connecticut; right? So, my question is what is happened and what not happened after the tragedy in December 2012 in Sandy Hook in Newton? I’ve got two friends who are teachers, and I believe so they are lying to me, but they say there’s nothing happen basically. One of them, her husband which -- who is coworker with me he said he bought for his wife to protect her bee spray ‘cause that’s the one thing that she can carry in the school. But that’s not what I want to talk about.

Okay, there was a lot of things which the people talk before me about education, and I’m agree 100 percent with that. I believe so and I know. Like is aid, I’m the father with one woman and we got eight kids, and I believe education starts in the home. How are we gonna teach? How our kids learn from us they’re gonna be -- became when they’re gonna grow up, and first of all, like I said, I came from Europe. There was also some -- sorry, I just jumped from one thing to the other. There was somebody said about we supposed -- our country, United States, my second country -- we supposed to take examples from Europe. I don’t think so. I don’t think so because in Europe it’s a lot of country and people who live in Europe fight right
now for the rights to carry and have the arms like the peaceful and stuff like that -- to protect themselves. Because with our history -- history of Poland -- I believe so, our government is here to protect us, and they are the brave people like the people -- not like the people who was in the second World War and led the people with no arms. They are just separate from the country. They will leave the people by themselves. I believe so nothing happened over here in this country.

I’m here to support SB No. 940, and supporting HB No. 5227. [Bell]. I am supporting 5870, and I’m opposed SB No. 60. I’m opposed HB No. 7219, 7223, and if I got one more second? I am the pistol permit -- I got a pistol permit; right? So, of course, I got the safe in my house. I’ve got the safe in my house not because somebody told me buy it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): All right.

RADEK KOLAKOWSKI: I’m -- I think I’m responsible father. My kids know how to -- they know they can’t touch my guns. I do not let them ever touch it.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Great. Thanks.

RADEK KOLAKOWSKI: But the older -- yes.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you. I don’t know how you handle eight of them. I can hardly handle two, so I give you quite a bit of credit on eight kids. Questions from the committee?

RADEK KOLAKOWSKI: It’s hard.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I can only imagine. I’m seeing none. Thank you so much for being with us and staying so late with us. Appreciate it.
RADEK KOLAKOWSKI: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): I think we have one more gentleman. If you could just start with giving us your name because we don’t -- we don’t have it.

ALEX VILLAMIL: Sure. It’s Alex Villamil, Newton, Connecticut. And, I submitted this by -- by email already. Thank you members of the Judiciary Committee for allowing me to speak. For the record, I’m here in support of bills HB 7218, 7223, 7219, and SB 60. This is a personal statement from the perspective of a victim of gun violence. My name is Alex Villamil, and I’m a resident of Sandy Hook, Connecticut. For many years, I have avoided gun violence issue for personal reasons. Due to the seemingly never-ending deaths that we hear about in the news occurring almost on a daily basis, I decided as of last year that I needed to step up and help out. The reason for my reticence in dealing with the issue of gun violence was because of the death of my brother.

Back in August of 1992, my brother was gunned down by a disgruntled employee. When the employee heard he was fired, he demanded his paycheck on the spot, and when my brother told him to come back towards that afternoon, his employee pulled out a revolver and shot him five times killing him on the spot. The member of that time brings a flood of bad memories as you can imagine. For that reason, I’ve avoided anything dealing with guns. I was very close to my brother and regardless of the passage of time, it still remains an open wound that has never healed.

I want this committee to take in the depth and scope of gun violence. It not only affects the life taken
but it ravages lives of those whose loved ones was taken. Whenever the memory of what happened 27 years ago this coming August comes flooding back, it’s like reliving the pain and the loss of my brother like it was only yesterday. It was the loss of a -- it was the loss of a young wife who lost her husband, a loss of two children who never got to know their father, and for me who had a brother, a best friend, and all of a sudden didn’t. A loss of not only what was but what could have been. I personally hate guns. I’ve never owned one, and I don’t think I ever even will own one. For those people who find the need to own guns, I believe that once they assume the ownership of a weapon, they assume the responsibility of that weapon. A gun by its nature is lethal; therefore, it is important to make sure that that weapon does not fall in the hands of anyone not intended to use it or in turn handle it in a responsible fashion.

The current legislation proposed that requires gun owners to safely store a revolver can save lives. I think back on the Sandy Hook tragedy, which was in my own town, and subsequent tragedies. Had those weapons been kept away from unintended hands, many lives could have been saved. By supporting this bill, this committee has within their power to prevent more tragic loss of life, not only loss of life, but the collateral harm that the victim’s loved one have to endure. Safe storage of a revolver may be at the most -- safe storage of a revolver may be at the most an inconvenience, but the public good that that inconvenience imparts is immeasurable. I’m here to honor the memory of my brother, and I guess in a sense [Crying] -- in a
sense to make laws -- make these laws have some
meaning. Sorry, I realize this is late.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

ALEX VILLAMIL: His senseless death -- his was a
senseless death, and I’m here for myself because the
suffering and the heartbreak that I and my endure is
a suffering that I think the passing of the bills in
question can prevent other families from
experiencing. Please support bills numbers HB 7218,
7223, 7219, SB 60. Thank you for your time.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you, and I want to
thank you for sticking with us until a quarter after
midnight, almost 20 after midnight to share your
story. Questions from the committee? I’m seeing
none. Oh, Senator Haskell.

SENATOR HASKELL (26TH): Just very briefly I want to
thank you, and I think this is the last public
testimony that we will be hearing today because it
is such an honest and an emotional tribute not only
to your brother, but also the gun deaths that
hopefully we can prevent in the future, so thank you
so much, and I’ll just say that I learned the most
today on both sides of the issue, but the most from
people who shared those personal stories, and I’m
grateful that you took the time to do that with this
committee tonight. And, thank you, Mr. Chair.

ALEX VILLAMIL: If I might make one final wrap up,
it’s -- I kept hearing. I wasn’t here all night. I
had to leave, but I kept hearing like all the
intricacies about the bill, but the thing that was
forgotten were the victims and the family, and what
I call the collateral harm that’s imparted when
these -- these safe gun laws are not
passed. You know, there’s -- there’s something about -- I realize there are some constitutional issues. I realize there are some things I consider inconveniences, but for the safety of the public, for the safety of like -- of -- of just having some peace of mind, I think there are sometimes you have to give up certain things, you know, just for the -- just it’s not about the laws that are being thread upon. I believe in the constitution. I’m a strong proponent of the constitution. I do not trample on that, but for the safety and for the benefit of the public sometimes we should stake a step back and look at what’s good for the public. I was -- I never -- there was a time when I disagreed with the seatbelt law for instance. I thought it was -- you know, nobody’s gonna tell me to put a seatbelt on, but then I realized that was for my own benefit, it’s for my own good, it made sense, so.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you.

ALEX VILLAMIL: In the same token, these gun safety laws are important.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Thank you very much.

ALEX VILLAMIL: Thank you.

REP. STAFSTROM (129TH): Was there anybody else from the public that did not have a chance to testify? Well, I want to thank everyone for sticking with us. I especially want to thank our staff who has been with us since very early this morning doing sign outs. I want to thank everyone who stuck this hearing out with us and -- and all the folks who were here for many hours today sharing personal stories on both sides of this, and I want to thank everyone for a generally very civil and cordial
public hearing on some contested issues today, so thank you all. With that, we are adjourned.