Dear Distinguished Members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am a resident of Wethersfield, CT and I wish to provide written testimony for the public hearing on Monday, March 6thth 2023.

I OPPOSE H.B. 6667:

Despite its name, this bill does not address the root causes of gun violence and violent crime. Once again legal gun owners are under attack with legislation that further restricts the right to self defense and to bear arms.

The governor's bill claims, without evidence, that banning open carry of firearms in public is necessary to stop polling intimidation, protest intimidation and public safety challenges. I am not aware of or able to find any statistics that would indicate that gun owners are using open carry to intimidate at the polls or at protests. Nor do I see this reported as an active public safety challenge for officers. This bill further limits the legal and lawful carrying of firearms, including those that are intended to be carried concealed. If a person is carrying their firearm concealed under their shirt and happens to move in a certain way, that firearm is no longer concealed; is this now breaking the law? The reality is that this is a law that is entirely unnecessary. Those that lawfully carry a firearm should be able to choose how they wish to carry that firearm.

HB 6667 claims that under the current law criminals can purchase firearms in bulk and sell them on the underground market. There is zero evidence that this is happening in our communities. Every single firearm purchase goes through a check with the State and recorded. The serial number of the firearm is recorded. If a gun were purchased and sold on the black market, the serial number would easily get traced back to the original purchaser. Nobody in their right mind would think they can get away with this. The real intent of HB6667 is to further restrict the individual ownership of firearms through arbitrary limitations. It is unnecessary and unconstitutional.

HB6667 intends to introduce a licensing scheme to State licensing scheme for gun dealers. This is unnecessary given the existing licensing process with the ATF. This seems like another tax and more paperwork for our firearms businesses. I have no doubt that every firearms dealer in CT takes their obligations seriously given the anti-gun nature of the State.

Every few years, this state keeps adding firearms that are in common use to the already long list. I am not aware of or able to find any kind of crime statistics that would justify this ban (i.e., showing that they have a significant presence in crime as compared to other legal weapons in the state of CT). Like a number of other CT gun laws, features of concern are often based on cosmetics or seemingly arbitrary justifications. Banning firearms, firearm features and banning 28-year-old firearms is not the answer to decreasing illegal firearms in Connecticut. The governor refers to further bans as "closing loopholes" when the reality is gun owners in this State are jumping through hoops to exercise their constitutionally protected rights. Weapons owned legally today become illegal tomorrow. This is the slippery slope that lawful gun owners fight every year in this State.

HB6667 aims to make first-time possession of a standard capacity magazine (known as a high-capacity magazine in the State of CT) to a Class D felony. In most other states in this country, these magazines are freely sold and included with the purchase of new firearms. It is clear that governor's hatred of gun owners and the Second Amendment is driving his punitive measures.

The governor's bill increases the age to purchase any firearms, including long rifles and shotguns, to 21. His legislative proposal fact sheet states that "Raising the age allows young people's brains to develop — especially parts of the brain managing impulse control, judgement, and long-range planning — before they are legally able to purchase a long gun." Using that logic, shouldn't we raise the age to vote and allow one to serve in the military? Of course not. And neither should we further limit the ability to own a firearm, train and defend one's life at home.

HB 6667 introduces a 10-day waiting period on firearm purchases. Purchasers are firearms are vetted upon receiving their pistol permit as well as at time of sale. A waiting period places an arbitrary and unnecessary limitation on the constitutional right to purchase a firearm and defend oneself. While suicides are tragic, it is unfair to force all law-abiding gun owners to wait to receive their firearms. The overwhelming majority of gun purchases do not result in unlawful violence or suicide.

HB6667 contains several so-called safety measures that would limit one's ability to defend oneself in a matter of life and death. It further expands storage requirements which makes accessing one's firearm in an emergency more difficult. The governor's bill would require all handguns sold in the State of CT to have a "magazine disconnect feature" that prevents the trigger from being pulled if the magazine is removed. The side effect of such a measure is another point of failure on the firearm in a high-stress situation. If a gun owner is forced to defend themselves during a home invasion, they may have to quickly change a magazine. If that magazine isn't seated perfectly, the firearm will prevent the trigger from firing. I would personally never want to rely upon a firearm with a magazine disconnect in place. Not only that, but the number of firearms that actually contain magazine disconnects is very small in comparison those currently sold. The same is true for the "loaded chamber indicator" that the bill would require. This is a back-door ban on a number of additional firearms. The reality is that neighborhood break-ins are more common than ever and Connecticut residents need reliable means to defend their lives and the lives of their families in the worst-case scenarios.

I OPPOSE H.B. 6816:

Microstamping is simply not feasible for the majority of firearms manufactures to reliably implement. There is little evidence to support what reduction in crime, if any, this onerous requirement will actually provide. We do know that it would severely limit the number of firearms available for Connecticut residents to purchase and ultimately lead to another back-door ban of firearms in the State.

There is simply no legitimate reason to prevent the sale of body armor to civilians. Body armor is a purely defensive tool that can save one's life. It cannot harm anyone. It should not be banned in CT.

Respectfully submitted,

Martin Grabeck

Wethersfield, CT