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State of Connecticut
SENATE

SENIOR DEPUTY REPUBLICAN LEADER

RANKING MEMBER
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION &
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE
HOUSING COMMITTEE
LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE
GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Testimony
Sen. Rob Sampson
Judiciary Committee
March 11, 2026

Opposition:
H.B. 5043: An Act Prohibiting the Manufacture and Sale of Convertible Pistols

Co-Chairs Winfield and Stafstrom, Vice-Chairs Flexer, Gadkar-Wilcox, and Fazzino, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am submitting testimony in strong opposition to this proposal.

This bill attempts to ban the sale of a category of common semiautomatic pistols because someone might theoretically modify one illegally. That is the basic premise behind this legislation.

Think about that for a moment.

Millions of Americans own these types of pistols. They are among the most common handguns used for lawful purposes in this country. People buy them for personal protection, training, sport shooting, and in many cases because they are the most practical firearm available for a first-time gun owner.

These are ordinary firearms owned by ordinary, law-abiding people.

Yet this bill treats them as if they are somehow problematic simply because someone could illegally modify one with a prohibited device.

Here is the problem with that argument.

The device that converts a semiautomatic pistol into a fully automatic firearm is already illegal under federal law. It is also illegal under Connecticut law. These conversion devices have been prohibited for decades and under federal law they are classified as machine guns themselves.

So the criminal conduct this bill claims to address is already illegal.

Instead of focusing on criminals who possess or manufacture those devices, this proposal goes after a class of lawful firearms that millions of responsible citizens own and use safely every day.

And the reasoning behind it simply does not hold up.

Sawed off shotguns are illegal. They have been illegal for a very long time. But we do not ban the sale of ordinary shotguns just because someone could illegally cut one down. If the standard for banning a lawful product becomes the possibility that someone could illegally alter it, then the principle being proposed here would extend far beyond firearms and into countless ordinary products used safely by responsible people every day.

The same logic applies everywhere else in society. We do not ban bleach or common cleaning products simply because someone could misuse them to create poison or explosives.

In a free society we punish illegal conduct. We do not ban ordinary, lawful products simply because someone might misuse them.

Yet that is exactly what this bill proposes to do.

This legislation is not about closing some dangerous loophole. It is about restricting access to common firearms that are widely owned and widely used for lawful purposes.

Connecticut already regulates gun ownership more aggressively than most states in the country. Residents must obtain permits, complete training, submit fingerprints, pass background checks, and navigate a complicated system just to purchase a handgun.

The people who comply with those rules are not criminals.

They are responsible citizens who respect the law and who are exercising a constitutional right.

But legislation like this continues to treat them as if they are the problem.

Meanwhile the criminals who actually misuse firearms will continue to obtain them illegally, just as they always have. They will not care about the newest regulatory definition passed in Hartford.

This is why proposals like this are so frustrating.

Instead of focusing on criminals who commit violence, the majority continues to pursue legislation that targets the people who already follow the law.

And the people most affected by these proposals are not dangerous individuals. They are the exact opposite.

They are veterans, hunters, sportsmen, small business owners, instructors, and ordinary citizens who simply want the ability to protect themselves and their families.

That community deserves respect. Instead, bills like this treat them with suspicion and hostility.

I find that deeply troubling.

Banning common firearms owned by millions of Americans will not make Connecticut safer. It will simply limit the options available to law abiding residents who want to exercise their rights responsibly.

For all of these reasons, I strongly urge the committee to reject this proposal.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Sampson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rob Sampson
State Senator - 16th District