

SENATOR ROB SAMPSON
SIXTEENTH DISTRICT

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING
300 CAPITOL AVENUE, SUITE 3400
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

Capitol: (860) 240-8843
Toll Free: (800) 842-1421
E-mail: rob.sampson@cga.ct.gov
Website: senatorsampson.com



State of Connecticut

SENATE

Testimony

Sen. Rob Sampson

Judiciary Committee

March 11, 2026

SENIOR DEPUTY REPUBLICAN LEADER

RANKING MEMBER

GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION &
ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

HOUSING COMMITTEE

LABOR & PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE

GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Opposition:

H.B. 5436 (RAISED): An Act Amending Certain Firearms Definitions and Concerning the Transfer of Large Capacity Magazines and Assault Weapons

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

I am submitting testimony in strong opposition to H.B. 5436.

This bill is yet another example of Connecticut Democrats using the power of government to harass, burden, and stigmatize law-abiding gun owners while doing virtually nothing to address actual criminal behavior.

Connecticut already has some of the most restrictive firearm laws in the nation. Law-abiding citizens in our state have endured years of expanding regulations, registration requirements, background checks, training mandates, and an increasingly complicated permitting process simply to exercise a constitutional right. And yet here we are again, with another proposal aimed squarely at the same responsible people who already follow the law.

Let me be clear. Criminals do not comply with gun control laws. They never have and they never will.

Every new restriction imposed by legislation like this one falls almost exclusively on the backs of people who are already doing everything the law requires of them.

Meanwhile, the individuals actually committing violent crimes in our communities are largely unaffected by these policies. Criminals obtain firearms through illegal trafficking, theft, and the black market, not through the lawful channels that this bill seeks to regulate even further.

One particularly troubling provision of this legislation is its attempt to redefine what Connecticut considers a firearm. Under the proposal, the statutory definition would be expanded to include so-called major firearm components such as barrels, slides, cylinders, frames, and receivers.

People who are knowledgeable about the policies and laws governing firearms understand that this approach makes little sense.

Under federal law, the portion of a firearm that is legally considered the firearm itself is the serialized frame or receiver. Typically, this is the main part of the gun that houses the trigger assembly, commonly known as the lower receiver.

This is the component that carries the serial number and is regulated at the point of sale. It is the part transferred through a federally licensed firearms dealer and the part tied to the background check process.

This system exists for a reason. The serialized receiver is the component that ultimately allows a firearm to function as a complete weapon. Without it, the other parts cannot form a working firearm.

Requiring serialization or treating other parts such as barrels, slides, or cylinders as standalone firearms is pointless. None of those components can function as a firearm without the serialized receiver.

All this bill accomplishes is the creation of immense impractical nonsense for the manufacturers who produce these parts, the dealers who sell them, and the free citizens whose constitutional rights lawmakers are once again interfering with.

This does nothing to enhance public safety. It simply creates confusion and unnecessary legal risk for responsible people trying to follow the rules.

And let us be honest about something else. Criminals will continue to obtain firearms and firearm parts regardless of how Connecticut chooses to redefine them. Other states will not be adopting these kinds of extreme regulatory interpretations. As a result, these restrictions will have virtually zero impact on criminal access to firearms or firearm components.

What they will do is make life harder for lawful gun owners.

Unfortunately, this legislation reflects a broader and very troubling pattern in Connecticut. Instead of focusing on enforcing existing laws and prosecuting criminals who misuse firearms, the majority continues to target the people who respect the law.

At the same time, we see persistent efforts by the majority to undermine law enforcement, reduce criminal penalties, and weaken accountability within our justice system. Crime rises, criminals face fewer consequences, and the response from the majority is more restrictions on responsible citizens.

It would be laughable if it were not so serious.

This bill is not about public safety. It is about politics. For many of the proponents of legislation like this, the goal does not appear to be solving crime. The goal is restricting gun ownership itself. If the objective were truly public safety, we would see the same energy directed toward prosecuting repeat offenders, supporting law enforcement, and addressing the criminal misuse of firearms. Instead, we see a continual focus on regulating the behavior of people who are already following the law. Law-abiding gun owners are simply an easier political target than violent criminals, and proposals like this one make that painfully clear.

It is about signaling hostility toward a constitutional right and toward the Americans who choose to exercise that right.

As a gun owner, a patriot, and someone who originally ran for office to defend the rights guaranteed to us by the Constitution, I find this continual assault on law-abiding firearm owners deeply troubling.

It is also important to recognize a reality that is rarely acknowledged in debates like this. Lawful gun ownership helps keep our communities safe.

The simple prevalence of armed, responsible citizens has long served as a powerful deterrent to crime. Millions of Americans safely and responsibly own firearms for personal protection, hunting, sport shooting, and defense of their families.

Those citizens are not the problem.

They are our neighbors, our veterans, our sportsmen, and our constituents.

Finally, legislation like this raises serious constitutional concerns. Recent decisions of the United States Supreme Court have made clear that modern firearm regulations must be consistent with this nation's historical tradition of firearm regulation. Policies that continually expand restrictions on common firearms and firearm components without historical precedent raise serious constitutional questions.

In short, this legislation is unnecessary, ineffective, constitutionally questionable, and yet another example of misguided hostility toward law-abiding gun owners.

For 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