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From: William Bartels <bbartels123@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2025 9:00 PM
To: House Judiciary Committee
Subject: A Progressive against the assault weapons ban bill H-5436

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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I am a progressive who has not voted for a Republican in over two decades (and will not vote for one for the foreseeable future), who does not own a gun and has no plans to do so, and I also very much want to reduce gun violence of all types. I supported the magazine limits bill and so-called Red Flag laws that were passed previously. And among the current gun related bills, I support the self-surrendering voluntary firearms restriction one as a potentially effective way to prevent at least some suicides.

But H-5436 is not the way to reduce gun violence. Almost all aspects of the definition have to do with non-essential or cosmetic aspects that have little if anything to do with the lethality of the weapon. For example the barrel guard banned in the definition could be replaced by a wooden extension under the barrel like other long guns have. Most, if not all, of the other items are similarly more cosmetic than functional and no doubt clever work arounds will be found. There is nothing in the bill about the factors that are more directly related to lethality like bullet caliber, the muzzle velocity, etc. So people with ingenuity, financial resources and drive will still be able to make or find, even buy and sell, firearms that are without the specific banned items yet essentially and functionally the same.

It seems therefore that this is more an attempt to pass something that may seem to take serious steps to limit gun violence while actually accomplishing very little.

Furthermore, the grandfather part of the bill that requires current owners to register with police contradicts R.I. Gen. Law § 11-47-41 which is already on the books and prohibits any government authority from keeping a register of privately owned firearms and their owners unless the firearm was used in a crime of violence or the owner was convicted of a crime of violence.

This bill will not do what its sponsors, all well-meaning no doubt, want it to do. It will be unduly burdensome to law abiding folks who already have such firearms, yet totally ignored by those intent on criminal mischief. It will be financially discriminatory, and given the way it is written, easy to inadvertently run afoul of.

Rather than this bill, a much more effective approach would be to pass laws to encourage and support gun violence prevention strategies and programs. See the many such evidence backed programs supported by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health at <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/center-for-gun-violence-solutions/solutions/community-violence-intervention>

This bill might seem to be effective but will very likely not be; on the other hand, programs like the above, though less glamorous than the so-called assault weapon ban, have been shown to work.

Thank you.

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