

Opposition to House Bill 7636

Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Good afternoon. My name is Stephen Daignault, and I am here to express opposition to House Bill 7636.

At first glance, this legislation is framed as a voluntary tool. However, from a practical standpoint, it does not meaningfully address the underlying issue it is intended to solve. Individuals who are concerned about their own safety already have the ability to take immediate, effective action—whether that means securing their firearms, transferring them lawfully, or removing access altogether. That does not require a new statutory framework or placement on a government-maintained list.

More importantly, this bill does not address the root cause of suicide, which is a mental health crisis. If someone is in a state of distress, restricting access to one particular means does not resolve the underlying condition. Individuals intent on self-harm may seek alternative methods. Real progress requires investment in mental health services, early intervention, and access to care—not the creation of additional registries or administrative processes that operate after a person has already reached a critical point.

There are also practical concerns about how this system could function in the real world. While the bill is described as voluntary, it introduces a formalized process that could be susceptible to external pressure. Whether from personal relationships, medical settings, or other influences, the possibility of coercion cannot be dismissed. Once an individual places themselves into a government system that restricts a constitutional right, even temporarily, it raises legitimate concerns about how easily that status can be reversed and whether unintended consequences may follow.

From a constitutional perspective, the Second Amendment protects the right of individuals to keep and bear arms. While this bill relies on voluntary participation, it still creates a state-managed mechanism that restricts that right and conditions its restoration through a government process. Any system that formalizes the surrender and reinstatement of a constitutional right—particularly one that involves waiting periods and administrative controls—must be scrutinized carefully. There is concern that such frameworks can become a foundation for broader, less voluntary restrictions over time.

Finally, there is the issue of public trust. Legislation that appears to expand government involvement in lawful firearm ownership—especially when it does not clearly solve the problem it targets—can erode confidence among constituents. People expect that their rights will be protected and that proposed solutions will be both effective and proportionate. When a bill does not clearly meet those standards, it risks undermining that trust.

If the goal is to reduce suicide and protect lives, the focus should be on strengthening mental health systems, increasing access to care, and addressing the root causes of crisis.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to oppose House Bill 7636. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Stephen Daignault