

Lacking Law Enforcement Support

While there may be individual officers that support this legislation, it certainly appears the majority do not. If this truly had the support of law enforcement, as you may hear or have heard today, you would see endorsements by the FOP (Fraternal Order of Police), and The IBPO (International Brotherhood of Police Officers). These two union cover the majority of officers within the state. What else is lacking is an endorsement by the Police Chiefs Association.

The lack of these endorsements speaks volumes. I have personally spoken with many law enforcement officers, from high ranking to street officers and they have all told me the same thing, this bill goes way too far and shouldn't even make it out of committee.

School Shootings and Assault Weapon Bans

In 1989, as a result of 5 deaths at a Cleveland Elementary school, CA enacted the Roberti-Roos Assault Weapons Control Act of 1989. Since that time CA has endured more shootings and deaths at educational facilities than any other state in the country. CA has shown time and time again, the assault weapon bans aren't the answer.

CT first passed an assault weapons ban back in 1993. The law was revised in 2001 and again in 2002. The deadly Sandy Hook shooting took place in December of 2012. Here again, assault weapon bans don't work.

In Contrast, In 2007 VA had the worst school shooting in the country at VA Tech. Today, the only restrictions on so-called assault weapons in VA is the age, 18 for rifles and 21 for handguns and in addition they don't have magazine capacity restrictions. Also of note regarding the Virginia Tech shooting, the very next day after the shooting, a new group was formed,

, and a year later it claimed to have 16,000 members nationwide. Today the SCC has over 36,000 members.

At the very bottom of the list for school shooting is Wyoming, North Dakota, and Vermont, all without having an assault weapons ban. We should be looking at what these states are doing for guidance, rather than the rushing to pass feel good legislation.

Limitations of what can be carried and where:

§ 11-47-11. License or permit to carry concealed pistol or revolver.

Currently... a license or permit to the person to carry concealed upon his or her person a pistol or revolver **everywhere within this state** for four (4) years from date of issue...The license or permit shall be in triplicate in form to be prescribed by the attorney general... **and in no case shall it contain the serial number of any firearm.**

§ 11-47.2-5 Use and possession of assault weapon.

The proposed legislation says...may possess the assault weapon only under the following conditions:

Person's residence, place of business or at other property owned by that person, target range or at an exhibition.

The statute specifically mandates that while the assault weapon is being transported the firearm must be in a secure storage.

As a practical matter, anyone who has a carry permit has a legitimate reason for having it. Here, if they are transporting large sums of money, working for a financial institution, or working as armed security for someone of importance, they will no longer have the ability to properly defend themselves with a weapon which they rightfully own, or to protect the money or the person they were hired to defend. They will be outgunned as the criminals are certainly not going to care about these prohibitions.

And here again, the prohibition of the serial number of any firearm, i.e. no gun registration.

Firearms Registration Mandate

§ 11-47-41. Government firearm registration prohibited.

No government agency of this state or its political subdivisions shall keep or cause to be kept any list or register of privately owned firearms or any list or register of the owners of those firearms; provided, that the provisions of this section shall not apply to firearms which have been used in committing any crime of violence, nor to any person who has been convicted of a crime of violence.

History of Section.
P.L. 1959, ch. 75, § 1.

§ 11-47.2-4 Registration of assault weapons

- (a)(2) Submit to a fingerprint-supported criminal background check to ascertain whether the person is disqualified from the lawful possession of firearms...said registration shall include the make, model, caliber and serial number for each firearm...With a copy to the registrant, the RISP, Local PD and the AG.

This creating 3 times as many locations for sensitive information to be stored, and 3 times as many chances for it to be compromised, as was done just this past December where a ransomware attack resulted in the personal information of over 650,000 Rhode Islanders being stolen in the attack. That's roughly 65% of Rhode Islanders. So forgive me if I don't trust a government database.

What this law creates is a search of my property without having to get a warrant. It demands that we supply the government with information on the contents located within our possession. What's just as insulting is the requirement of a fingerprint supported background check. The disqualification process had already taken place prior to the firearm being obtained. Under this proposal, a gun owner has to prove their innocence in order to register their firearm(s). The presumption of innocence goes back to Roman times, a legal principal where one is innocent until proven guilty. Here, were being required to prove ourselves innocent or worthy of being able to register firearms.

In the 1920's Werner Best, a future Gestapo official, created the mandate that all firearms had to be registered. In 1933, Adolf Hitler seized power and used those gun registrations to identify, disarm, and attack political opponents and Jews.

Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it.

Cooperation and Coordination

What is missing here today is the coordination and cooperation of the various groups that are here. Instead of working against each other, we should be working together to form a consensus of what's best for our residents, trying to be an example for other states to follow. Rather than rushing to pass this one sided legislation, we should be concentrated on creating a committee or commission that thoroughly examines the issues and what works best. The committee should be comprised of a broad spectrum of those connected with Mom's demand Action, the RI Coalition against Gun Violence, the NRA and the 2nd Amendment personnel. What are the concerns of each groups and what can be done to address each other's issues?