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April 25, 2024

Kayla Morse, Committee Assistant
House Committee on Judiciary
State House, 115 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

Dear Ms. Morse,

I am writing to you today on behalf of the American Knife and Tool Institute (AKTI) to ask that next session you consider legislation that would remove criminal penalties for the possession or sale of automatic knives. Legislation to this effect has been introduced the past several sessions, but has yet to advance out of the Judiciary Committee. On behalf of AKTI, I would like to offer our strong support for the issues and assistance with any questions on potential legislation.

For background, Vermont already allows for the deployment mechanism of automatic knives but places an arbitrary maximum length of the tool that is smaller than most knives. For example, the paring knife, utility knife, and chef's knife found in kitchens are all much longer than the 3.5" limit on automatic opening knives.

Most people carry knives for ordinary, everyday purposes. People engaged in the building trades, agriculture, and animal husbandry use and carry knives daily. Automatic knives are currently legal in forty-four states with some variations. They are one of several "one-hand deployment" options found to be extremely useful, primarily in the professional trades and by outdoor recreationalists. To illustrate, a roofer may prefer to carry an automatic knife in his pocket as part of his standard tools because while on a ladder, he only has one hand available to open and lock a knife. The automatic opening is a necessary feature for his safety and to effectively do his job. A fisherman, holding his catch with one hand while simultaneously needing to cut the line of a swallowed hook with his other

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hand, does not want to struggle to open a knife. In both cases, the task may be technically achievable with different tools but not as safely and quickly as with an automatic knife.

Many states once passed laws restricting the manufacture, possession, and use of automatic knives. These laws were put in place when automatic knives were perceived as the weapon of choice for criminals; if this was ever the case, today, automatic knives are far from the leading "dangerous weapon." Instead, well-intentioned, law-abiding citizens, such as tradesmen, outdoors people, and professionals, use automatic knives.

In the last decade, more than a dozen states have amended their knife laws to permit more law-abiding citizens to carry and use automatic knives the way they do any other tool. While Vermont allows the sale and possession of automatic knives below 3.5", the current law is an outlier compared to other states that have no restrictions on length, and it places unnecessary restrictions on knife users.

Please feel free to contact our organization's legislative representatives to arrange a meeting, answer any questions, or if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

CJ Buck
CEO, Buck Knives, Inc.
President, American Knife & Tool Institute