



2275 Research Blvd, Suite 500, Rockville, MD 20850
O: 202.280.8942 | F: 240.715.9637 | www.aegisarmor.com

Chairwoman White
Senate Committee for Government Operations
Vermont State House (RM 4)
Montpelier, Vermont 05633-5301

April 21, 2014

Dear Mrs. White,

I wanted to thank you for the opportunity you afforded me last week to speak with the Senate Committee for Government Operations regarding H. 225.

I also wanted to share two final thoughts with your Committee if I may be so bold:

1) Every citizen should have the *Right* to know whether the electroshock weapons being deployed by law enforcement on the general public, *and especially on children, the disabled, and other vulnerable populations*, are operating within a manufacturers specification or not. Yet, under the LEABs proposed policy, this *Right* is not even addressed, let alone protected.

Manufacturers have disclosed that many factors outside of their control that can impact the electrical current these weapons deliver. These same manufacturers have made it clear that the only way to ensure a weapon is operating within specifications is measurement. Manufacturers have also made it clear that law enforcement is responsible for ensuring these weapons are operating within the specifications prior to deployment. Yet, the LEAB has not addressed this issue.

2) Electroshock weapons were deployed prior to the development of any standards for safety, efficacy or performance. H. 225 is before you because of a clear lack of Federal government leadership. In fact, these standards still do not exist today. Without these standards, interested but conflicted parties are now attempting to convince you that a broad and generalized law governing the standardized use of these controversial weapons will provide predictable results that will balance safety and efficacy and are the best way defend an officer while still protecting the public.



2275 Research Blvd, Suite 500, Rockville, MD 20850
O: 202.280.8942 | F: 240.715.9637 | www.aegisarmor.com

I, and others, have sincere doubts about this. And for good reason, law enforcement is conflicted. The more broadly the law is written, the greater latitude and less liability law enforcement has in deploying these weapons. And while certain agencies in Vermont have reduced the usage of these weapons, a broadly written law or policy could absolutely encourage “usage creep,” the growing reliance on this potential deadly technology in scenarios not clearly defined in the broadly written laws or policies.

I would humbly suggest to the Committee that a further study is in order, just as the Canadians did, during and after, the Braidwood Inquiry. The results of this serious effort speak for themselves, *“Taser use by police in B.C. is down 87 per cent since Robert Dziekanski died at Vancouver's airport five years ago, prompting questions Tuesday from politicians wondering what police are doing now to control out-of-control people.”* <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-police-taser-use-down-87-since-dziekanski-death-1.1197616>. And this is without an increase in officer related shootings during the same timeframe. Coincidentally, the Canadians do require the measurement of these weapons to the manufacturer specifications.

The Vermont Legislature has a long and storied history being “first” in effectively dealing with many important social and legal issues confronting our Nation. I believe that your Committee, along with the House Committee for Government Operations, are in a very unique position to impact not only the way these weapons are deployed in Vermont but also throughout our Nation. And not just for this generation, but for generations to come.

I sincerely believe that this is another one, because a precedent, through standards, must be set before the next great “non-lethal” technology comes along.

Thank you very much.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kenneth Stethem', is written over the typed name.

Kenneth Stethem