

April 2, 2015

Dear members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to S.141. While the bill has been watered down to the point of having minimal impact, I still believe it is important for you to vote against it.

Giving Vermont law enforcement the ability to prosecute felons in possession of a firearm is unnecessary as these crimes are already being prosecuted by federal authorities, and we should not be expending precious state resources on redundant enforcement.

Persons adjudicated by the state to be a danger to themselves do not all fall into the category of those who should not be able to possess firearms. No one should be stripped of their firearms rights for no reason other than having an eating disorder or refusing to take medication. Furthermore, once someone has been subject to this provision of the bill, the process to have their rights restored is still too vague and has the potential to be excessively onerous.

The New Hampshire Gun Shop Project will go ahead with or without legislative backing, so there is no concern there.

Most important though, is the fact that the push for gun control that we have seen this year has been heavily funded by out of state interests. Gun Sense Vermont has only disclosed enough information on donations they have received to cover what they have spent on campaign donations, which they are legally required to do. They have spent \$78,000 on lobbyists in one year and have a paid director (I'm assuming this is at least \$40,000). The highly coordinated "sting" operation, which was dubious to say the least, and massive advertising campaign funded by Everytown For Gun Safety likely cost upwards of \$400,000. While the connection between these groups should be obvious, it was proven beyond any doubt in the testimony of a Gun Sense Vermont lobbyist given to the Senate Judiciary Committee recently. That testimony can be heard here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXRWIBnvSQc&feature=youtu.be>

Considering the current state of the State, I think it is important that you send a clear message to these groups that the Vermont Legislature

is not for sale and will not entertain proposals which are unneeded, solve no problems and simply serve as a distraction from truly pressing matters. Please help to discourage this wasteful episode from being repeated next year.

Thank you for your time and your service
Michael Ponte
Waterbury, VT