

I'm Ed Cutler, president of the Gun Owners of Vermont.
We stand in strong opposition to S.141 as it now stands for numerous reasons.

Section 1:

Persons Prohibited from Possessing Firearms; Conviction of Violent Crime:

To begin with, we feel that this bill is a solution to a problem that does not exist. The mere possession of a firearm does not mean a person become violent. As a matter of fact, it is just the opposite. According to the 2013 FBI Uniform Crime Report, Vermont is THE safest state in the union, with the lowest violent crime rate in the nation. The average firearm murder rate in Vermont is approximately 2 per year, while the average firearm ownership ranks among the highest in the nation.

According to the current FBI NICS data, there have been over 384,000 firearms purchased in Vermont since November 1998.

If we extrapolate back over the last 100 years, at 22,500 firearms purchased each year, that means that there are a minimum of 2.25 MILLION firearms in this state!

Some people are saying that there are no regulations to the possession of firearms by felons. This does not put us behind the other states, it puts us ahead of them, we are the shining example with our 230 year history of the safe and responsible use of firearms and the rest of the nation is starting to follow our lead!

We are the example that the rest of the nation is following, why do WE need to change?

Several states have already passed "Vermont Carry" where no permits are required to carry concealed firearms.

Many states will be passing Vermont Carry within a very short time including New Hampshire and Maine.

Tennessee just passed a law, supported by the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution, saying that federal gun control laws could not be enforced. In all these instances, the crime rates have dropped.

There is currently no expungement process in Vermont to get non-violent felons off the federal system even though this bill recognizes that this subset of the population does not pose a threat to public safety.

There is currently a statute under Title 13 Section 4005 that identifies a punishment for USING a firearm in the commission of a crime, S.141 seeks to create a new law that makes the FIREARM a crime, even if there is no ill intent or action!

Because there is no loss of rights in Vermont, even felons have the right to self defense against man or animal under Article 16 of the State Constitution. Does anyone remember the rabies epidemic that started in 1992?

Section 3:

Report; New Hampshire Gun Shop Project:

The New Hampshire Gun Shop Project as written in this bill is just a study, not the implementation of this type of program. The study has already been done. The sportsmen's groups within the state of Vermont will be researching, designing, developing, and implementing a similar type program in

Vermont, and there is no need for government regulations to do this, but we would welcome state agencies to participate with us.

This would be at no cost to the state, and would extoll the virtue of Vermont firearms owners, who have historically helped each other out in times of need.

Section 4:

Reporting:National Instant Criminal Background Check System:

The problems that concern us are as follows:

There are 260 persons that are in the system currently.

How many of these people are actually adjudicated for violent actions? How many are for self-inflicted actions? How many are simply incapable of taking care of themselves?

Do you even know how many of each type there are?

If the concern is only in regard to violent persons, should this not be specified BEFORE enacting a non-discriminate law?

According to Robert Emmons, MD, the number of violent persons are miniscule as compared to people with other issues.

Mental illness is often a temporary condition that can be treated with proper care.

Stigmatizing people who need help will only keep them from obtaining needed care.

According to our attorney, Cindy Ellen Hill Esq, the cost of beginning the expungement process will be a minimum of \$500 if it is uncontested by the State's Attorney. If contested, the price will simply increase.

Also, according to our attorney, if the State's Attorney does contest the process, the person only has a 25% chance of success.

We can assume that at least one State's Attorney will contest every one of these simply because he wrote the original bill and sat through the Senate Judiciary committee hearings on S.141.

The arbitrary 18 month wait before beginning any expungement process is far too long for the loss of a person's civil rights.

This portion of the bill is not mandated by federal statutes, it is voluntary, so why do you want to mandate a process that even the feds consider optional?

Instead, give us the opportunity to implement a Gun Shop Project which will truly help people in need in Vermont.

Our final opposition is because we look to the future.

Ann Braden and her organization, Gun Sense Vermont, backed by multi-billionaire Michael Bloomberg's Everytown for Gun Safety, have publicly stated that they WILL be back next year for more, and that this bill is a good first step.

The anti-gun forces have continually been untruthful throughout this whole process and within the next few weeks because of the national slander campaign against Crossfire Arms, LLC and the good and honest people of Vermont, will be sued for defamation of character. Under discovery, the truth will be uncovered.

Respectfully yours,

Ed Cutler

President Gun Owners of Vermont