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Vermont General Assembly

House Committee on Government Operations

115 State St.

Montpelier, VT 05633

RE: Amendments to the charter of the City of Burlington

Dear House Committee Members,

Thank you for accepting my written testimony on the proposed amendments to the charter of the City of Burlington. I feel very deeply about this issue of constitutional limitations and would prefer to be there in person.

I am strongly opposed to the proposed charter changes introduced by the City of Burlington for the following reasons:

1. Conflicts directly with Vermont State Constitution regarding '*The Sportsmen's Bill of Rights*.'
2. Allows 5,194, of the 31,195 registered Burlington voters, to set a critical precedent for every municipality in the State of Vermont to design and enact different firearm restrictions. {'Patchwork Problem'}
3. Stymies potential state-wide firearm regulations which would promote more reasonable compliance among responsible Vermont gun owners.
4. Will not create improved public safety as promised by those insisting that these charter changes are necessary.

Every week in Vermont the criminal element is hard at work, fueled by easy drug money and little punishment. In my neighborhood, criminals simply wait for citizens to leave for work so they can rob and steal their belongings at will. There is no legal difference between stealing a TV set or a citizen's firearm. But there is a huge difference in the value of those items when buying drugs. It is a regular occurrence that convenience stores, pharmacies and local banks in our state are robbed at gun-point to feed this criminal drug trade. This criminal drug trade is the real public safety problem-not the law abiding, tax paying, freedom loving Vermonters these proposed charter changes would actually affect.

Mayor Weinberger states these charter changes are necessary to keep his citizens safe. Yet **all** the recent shootings in Burlington are tied directly to criminals active in the local drug trade. Mr. Weinberger wants to protect his citizens, but he is instead setting a regressive precedent of government overreach and less freedom for all of Vermont. These changes might make him feel like he is 'doing something,' but it is not the kind of 'something' that will address the criminal element in our state. Why must the whole state lose rights to suit those in power of one municipality?

I hope legislation that makes Vermont more prosperous, free and affordable can be in our collective future. Few Vermonters agree with Burlington politicians that removing the Vermont Sportsmen's Bill of Rights and due process will make us any safer. Let's focus together on those criminals who believe they are above the law.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

