

To House Judiciary Committee:

S.141 does not include universal background checks, which is a disappointment to many who are advocating for changes to Vermont's gun laws, but was the most vexing aspect of S.31 for many gun rights proponents.

S.141 has three main components:

- 1) S.141 creates a state-level law to prohibit persons convicted of violent crime from possessing firearms. Right now there is a federal law prohibiting violent felons from possessing weapons, but there is no state law. This provision would give local law enforcement the ability to prosecute firearm possession offenses. Vermont is the only state in the country without a state law restricting felony possession.
- 2) The bill proposes to require that key court records are communicated to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) when someone is adjudicated to be a danger to themselves or others, or is found not responsible for a crime by reason of insanity. Right now if a person is found to be a danger to themselves or others, this information is not communicated, even though federal law prohibits the person from possessing a firearm.
- 3) The bill also requires the Departments of Public Safety and Mental Health to report on the establishment of a Vermont version of the New Hampshire Gun Shop Project. This is a suicide prevention education program based on helping gun shop owners recognize signs of suicidal behavior in their potential customers. It also encourages gun stores and firing ranges to display and distribute suicide prevention materials tailored to their customers.

Part 3 of S.141 I really like as I believe awareness, and education, are by far the most essential tools we have at our disposal. I worry about part 2 in the way that many people may fear repercussion for seeking help, and also wonder what this provision might do for the women of Vermont who have dealt with Postpartum Depression because we both know that depression is the key word that will put people on the "list" that is nearly impossible to get off even after being medically cleared. Part 1 is as you stated already a federal law so why are we not prosecuting these people on the federal level instead of wasting Tax dollars that are needed in so many other areas in our state budget.

While part 1 is an admirable component and part 3 is a great step in a positive direction, part 2 truly scares me and leads me to believe that the people in our great state that do need help even in the smallest degree will be too afraid to seek it. I am sure you are receiving many thoughts on both sides of the fence in this debate and I hope that after hearing the testimonies from the "grassroots" Gunesense you realize that they DO NOT speak for majority of Vermonters and that they are merely a puppet campaign for out of state interests.

I urge you to please stand with Vermonters and vote NO for S.141

Of the many Vermonters for Vermont we believe in our Rights, Our Freedom, and Our Vermont ways. You are a Vermont Legislator elected by us to uphold the above and the Vermont Constitution. A yes vote will show the Vermont people you are a Supporter of out of State Interests and not Vermont.

Thank you for your support,

Timothy A. Ordway  
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