

**The Gun Owners of Vermont Inc.**  
**PO Box 45**  
**Saxtons River, VT 05154**  
**(802) 463-9026**



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Hello, I am Bob DePino, the Vice President of Gun Owners of Vermont.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders.  
Gun Violence Restraining Orders.  
Gun Violence Protective Orders.  
Lethal Violence Protective Orders.  
"Red Flag Laws."

Call them what you will, the truth is, these types of orders are a NATIONAL legislative wave, started by anti-gun foundations like Johns Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health, Bloomberg's *Everytown* and *Mom's Demand Action*, Gabby Gifford's renamed *Gifford's* organization, the Joyce Foundation-funded *Violence Policy Center* and dozens more. In fact one leader in this **national** push is none other than the *American Bar Association*.

Closer to home, the New York and Washington driven politics of the *Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence*, has members in Vermont, such as Burlington's Chief of Police, Brandon del Pozo, who worked for Michael Bloomberg as Police Commander for the 6th and 50th Precincts during his 20 year tenure on the NYC police force. Now, Chief del Pozo works for Miro Weinberger (who in turn is a member of Bloomberg's *Everytown* (formerly *Mayors Against Illegal Guns*) and propaganda video star, and the Mayor that has pushed for unconstitutional firearms laws in Vermont since 2013!).

Amazing how small the world is.

Also amazing is how New York has such an insatiable appetite for controlling Vermont.

The ties between key Vermont political figures to New York influence is downright offensive.

The unending assault on our quiet little state began before we became the 14<sup>th</sup> state.

Ask Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys about New York.

ALL of these anti-gun organizations do NOT believe in the Constitutional Right of the American citizen to possess firearms. *The American Bar Association* knows that they cannot win this in Washington, and so, they take to the state-level, with Michael Bloomberg funding, one state at a time, beating down the population, or worse, sneaking it in through with back-door deals, campaign contributions and expensive lobbyists.

Vermont has always been one of the safest states in the nation, and we have an honorable history of protecting the rights of Vermonters to defend themselves. Protection of your safety is an ACTIVE pursuit, not a PASSIVE one to be performed by government.

Our Founders knew this

We've all heard the rhetoric, "if it could save JUST ONE life, it would be worth it."

We also know that there are only TEN Amendments in the Bill of Rights...

Why don't we get rid of ALL TEN of our rights and **SAVE TEN** lives? It would be worth it.

Sounds ridiculous doesn't it?

Well, scarily, to some politicians and lawyers in the ABA, it doesn't sound ridiculous.

It sounds like a PLAN.

Gun control is not about guns, it is about CONTROL.

Sometimes it is in the best interest of our citizens not to change things that work.

One of the purported uses of Extreme Risk Protection Orders is to stop school shooters.

Well, Vermont has had its first brush with a potential school shooter.

Did law enforcement rush to the court to procure an Extreme Risk Protection Order so that they could lawfully take away his guns?

Not at all.

They ARRESTED him.

Done.

If a person is too dangerous to possess firearms, they are too dangerous to walk the streets.

Lock them up. We have been saying this for YEARS.

Let us use our prison system for the truly dangerous criminals.

Vermont Law Enforcement **already** have the tools to keep Vermonters safe.

Giving up the protection of our **individual liberties** because of well-funded public outcry is unacceptable.

After the arrest in the Fair Haven school threat, the current Speaker of the House, Mitzi Johnson, wasted no time in using the killing at the Essex Elementary School in 2006 to perpetrate the myth of Vermont already having a "school shooting" in order to push for anti-gun legislation. You know, to "do something."

The shooting in Essex was after hours, during a domestic incident, and the children were NOT the intended target. Again, this is scare tactics to incite the people who do not know the

history to plead for protection.

Disgusting, but not surprising.

Because Vermont has such a low number of crimes, the truth about crimes involving firearms in Vermont HAS TO BE TWISTED when pushing the narrative that Vermont NEEDS new laws.

Over 40 gun control bills have been introduced and some debated under the golden dome since 2013.

Since 2013 a few laws were passed and what happened?

A domestic violence bill was passed to protect women in June of 2014, and since then:

A woman killed her husband in July 2014.

A woman killed her ex-boyfriend and his son in November 2014.

A woman killed FOUR other women after a child custody battle in August 2015.

A woman killed her husband in December 2016.

The people who work with the anti-gun groups that constantly propose that just ONE more gun control bill will save someone's life are PAID employees. They are PAID lobbyists. They are PAID activists. None of the anti-gun support is grassroots. That has been proven multiple times.

We have attended anti-gun meetings, press conferences and even church group discussions, and have actually interacted with many attendees, even though the anti-gun group leadership NEVER wanted to actually have that "discussion."

We have found most of them to be honestly interested in helping people.

We have also discovered that they are woefully misinformed.

We offered them statistics, facts and explanations on what is actually happening in Vermont.

They were appreciative and receptive to the truth.

They were upset that they were being lied to.

We have been invited back for additional church group meetings and future discussions.

We enjoyed the discussion and they appreciated our honesty.

The biggest thing we were able to convey was that those "scary" firearm owners in Vermont are NOT who the anti-gun groups and the media portray us to be.

Not a single one thought we were threatening. No one called us "bullies."

Apparently, many of those we have spoken to over the last few years must have talked to their friends and families, because three years after the showing of 50-odd green shirts in the well of the House, there were virtually NONE on January 30<sup>th</sup>. Instead, PURPLE was the color of choice as the anti-gun forces had to switch gears and focus on 16 domestic violence groups to bring in the supporters. Bloomberg had even provided BUSES from 3 border towns near New York, Massachusetts and New Hampshire and STILL barely 100 folks in total attended.

Stories flowed about incidents that "effected" Vermonters, even though the incidents actually happened in far-away places like Arizona a decade ago. Of the actual Vermont incidents, one

happened THREE DECADES AGO and the one from five years ago omitted some very important details.

Laws cannot PREVENT crime. Laws cannot ALTER mental illness. Laws cannot SHAPE morality.

Laws are SUPPOSED to provide penalties after-the-fact to act as a DETTERENT to crime.

Remembering the theme to Beretta, "Don't do the crime, if you can't do the time" we see times have changed.

Every law that has been proposed since 2013 CREATES a new crime BEFORE the fact.

Banning semi-automatic rifles so no one can possess one and hurt someone next year.

Banning ammunition magazines over a certain size so one won't be used in a future crime.

Banning firearms from businesses that serve alcohol so you won't hurt someone when drunk.

Banning firearm accessories like bump stocks so that a future murderer will have to shoot slower.

Banning certain types of ammunition because it might hurt animals that eat bullets.

Creating penalties for storing firearms "improperly."

Creating penalties for transferring firearms without federal intervention and registration.

Confiscation of firearms from people ACCUSED of domestic violence.

Confiscation of firearms from persons with mental health issues.

Confiscation of firearms from persons deemed too dangerous to possess them.

The list goes on and on...

**Not a single one of these proposed laws will effect criminals.**

Most will ONLY effect law-abiding Vermont firearms owners under the guise that the State can prevent a law-abiding citizen from "going bad."

NOTHING is further from the truth.

Law-abiding Vermont gun owners are people who live their lives with firearms on a daily, weekly or even yearly basis.

Law-abiding Vermont gun owners do not plot and plan criminal ventures.

Law-abiding Vermont gun owners teach their children responsibility and respect.

Law-abiding Vermont gun owners are appalled by tragedies seen on the news.

When lawmakers like Phil Baruth demonize gun owners as uncaring, heartless, monsters by ***openly mocking us in the chambers of the capitol***, as he did in January 2017, at the unveiling of more Universal Background Check legislation, their ulterior motives have nothing to do with safety, but everything to do with creating hatred and instilling fear in constituents who are not inclined to possess firearms.

**Creating a cultural and political divide between Vermonters who have lived, peacefully, side-by-side for decades is absolutely reprehensible.**

This has happened to me first-hand with my neighbor.

He and his wife moved here several years ago from an anti-gun state.

At first we got along rather well. Then we bumped into each other at the S31 hearing. I was wearing ORANGE, he was wearing GREEN. From that point on, our neighborly waves and chit-chat deteriorated to the point where I had to contact law enforcement.

What caused this **instantaneous** rift?

### **GUN CONTROL LEGISLATION**

Anti-gun rhetoric from both politicians and leaders of anti-gun groups have created enemies out of friends, hatred between neighbors, and even divisions within families!

This is **not** the Vermont way.

This is **not** the American way.

For an elected official to come back, year after year, insulting Vermonters and openly blaming the law-abiding citizens of this great state for the violent crime in this state is absolutely beyond the pale.

It needs to stop. It needs to stop, NOW. There is no reason to do this every single year forever.

Senator Joe Benning said it with complete clarity:

*“Legislation designed to restrict a given inanimate object may leave some feeling temporarily like they have “done something,” but constantly trying to legislate against a future killers’ weapon of choice with after-the-fact legislation is a race we cannot win.”*

Vermont has the lowest levels of violent crime in the nation because Vermont’s laws WORK.

Please don’t let outside influence dictate Vermont legislation.

Vermont’s firearm community would welcome working with the legislature on seeking solutions to reduce the number of deaths in Vermont.

We have done it before with the *Vermont Gun Shop Project*.

We don’t need legislation to help people.

Just Vermonters working together for a better society.

**Unfortunately, the only time we sit together is in hearings defending our rights against outside forces that demand we chip away at a Constitutional Right.**

Why can’t we sit together without a gun control bill on the table?

Why can’t we sit together as Vermonters, not as legislators and constituents and work to find a solution together?

Bob DePino

Vice President, Gun Owners of Vermont

GunOwnersOfVermont@gmail.com

802-869-2900