

Comments on Senate Bill S.169

I support the proposals by Senator Rodgers but oppose those of Senator Baruth. Senator Baruth has year after year waged a legislative war against rural Vermonters, apparently expecting us to meekly submit to his despotic attacks. Millions of Americans are presently engaged in civil disobedience against gun laws in states such as NY, MD, MA, NJ, CT, CA, WA, OR, IL, CO, and now Vermonters are included after last year's legislation. The legislation passed last year is despised by thousands of Vermonters and Baruth's present proposals go even further.

This state and our nation needs leaders who will bring peace and some semblance of unity and civility back to our society. It does not need the selfish spreading of hate and contempt that Baruth's proposals represent. There is a national trend of weaponizing politics against individuals or groups one side or the other dislikes. This trend will bring about the disintegration of our nation if it continues unchecked. Consider that the killer in New Zealand recently hoped to spark a civil war in America by prodding gun control activists to push more laws. That it is plainly visible to a complete outsider to this nation that we are on the verge of complete national disunity should be highly concerning. I urge the committee to not endorse this approach to politics as seen in D.C. these days but to instead drop the proposals that are an attack on rural Vermonters. Last year the legislature veneered its proposals with the claim that it was in response to a planned act of violence in Fair Haven. Jack Sawyer purchased a sporting shotgun at a licensed dealer. The legislature responded by banning common rifle and pistol magazines and mandating we go to licensed dealers. It doesn't pass the straight face test. It is time to cool down the culture wars in this country.

Today Baruth claims this new proposal will stop suicides. 3 people in 20 years committed suicide with a newly purchased firearm. It seems more likely to me that this is really another attempt to attack our culture. This proposal will kill gun shows and I know that is the real motivation. It may also kill the abused person who suddenly faces the wrath of a violent ex who may want to obtain a firearm for protection for the first time. Why should such a person be barred the right of self defense for an set period, when the SCOTUS has said people have a right to have a handgun? Is that potential loss of life acceptable because its proponents hate a segment of our society? Thousands of people should not be barred from obtaining the means of self-defense because of 3 people over 20 years.

Russia and Japan have the highest suicide rates in the world and it is virtually impossible for average citizens to have firearms legally in those countries. People simply find other ways to commit suicide without a firearm.

My own aunt killed herself 2 years ago. Kimberly Griffin of Rutland. She attempted to kill herself with pills and alcohol. She tried to check herself into the ER at Rutland to hold her for her own protection. They refused, I suspect in part because she was poor and they would lose money, and she shot herself. Not with a newly purchased firearm either. My aunt and I am sure others would have been saved if the hospital were required to hold those voluntarily checking themselves in because of suicidal feelings. With some form of mandated reporting to the state to ensure compliance and a follow up of help.

The magazine ban in California which is almost identical to that passed last year here was found unconstitutional by a federal judge. It is going to prove costly to the state when a court strikes this down and hundreds or thousands of gunowners demand compensation for the civil rights violations it represents in future civil suits. I suggest the state instead repeals that ban. It was the most hated part of the legislation.

Casey Jennings, Rutland, VT