

House Judiciary Testimony

May 13, 2019 - S.169

Thank you for the opportunity to briefly address the committee. It is important that given the long weeks since we last testified that VT Traditions Coalition policy be very clear. In recent weeks rumors and confusion have surfaced regarding policy and S. 169 As Passed by the Senate.

We continue to be unequivocally opposed to any Waiting Period for the lawful purchase of any lawful firearm. Along with other advocates, we have provided excellent scholarship and academic studies to both the House and Senate casting doubt regarding their effectiveness (also see attached links). At best the peer reviewed studies are inconclusive as to any statistical proof that their effects are a solution to suicide rates. At the same time during the California "experiment" with a broad swath of firearms regulation, including a long Waiting Period, their suicide rates rose along with the rest of the nation (appr. 1999 - 2016). Much of it possibly due to the economic devastation starting in 2007, and also amplified in rural areas hardest hit by the financial woes of the entire nation. The proof of effectiveness is simply not causational in statistically significant data. Rational economics and reductions in adolescent over-prescription of ADHD pills may be just two better ideas to lower suicide rates.

That S. 169 contains no exemptions for domestic violence victims at the height of their crisis also speaks to the doubts some here in the room have about the restriction. The bill should be shelved or the Waiting Period removed if these doubts still persist after so many weeks of questions and contemplation.

Much like the magazine bans passed last year, the unintended consequences have not been fully vetted nor researched with FFLs and other stakeholders. In the past weeks robust discussion and vetting could have taken place but this chamber has instead chosen to initiate a strange "radio silence". As with the magazine ban, the effects of that will extend into next year with requests for exemptions and tweaks that can never fully fix a bad idea.

Once again, simple solutions to complex problems are allusive. Repeatedly expecting them shows a lack of true introspection by both "sides" of any issue. As an example, why was this anti-suicide proposal never sent to the Health Care or Commerce Committees? If it is simply because the Senate issued an "all or nothing" ultimatum, that certainly begs the question. Please ask the question.

Speaking for VT Traditions Coalition, we were neither consulted nor would we have agreed to stifle debate and vetting of any infringement on lawful gun owners. We never agreed to such a "deal". We stand prepared to arrange expert and stakeholder testimony that can bring perspective to the table.

Thank you for your time and for all the conversations we have had off-line here in recent weeks. I am eager to address your questions at this time.

Links:

<https://academic.oup.com/ije/article-pdf/44/3/956/14152859/dyv009.pdf>

https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB9737.html

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db309.htm>

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