

H. 133 Testimony – Shawn P. Burke, Chief of Police South Burlington, Vermont
February 9, 2021

- Thank you for the opportunity to testify on this bill, one that offers clarity on the issue of firearm surrender when the Court has the sufficient evidence to order a relinquishment.
- Vermont law enforcement are certainly committed to insuring survivor safety, but there are some resource challenges related to firearm surrender:
 - Each department has vastly different capacities both in terms of human resources and physical space to do this work.
 - Most municipal police departments prepared FY 22 budgets against the backdrop of the pandemic, a majority of budgets merely sustain operations and don't allow for investment in firearms storage solutions.
- Currently, a group of domestic violence stakeholders in Vermont are working on a Firearms Technical Assistance Project led by the National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges. The technical assistance project aims to accomplish a few things to assist the broader system in operationalizing firearm surrender and abuse prevention order service, specifically:
 - Developing a standardized protocol for law enforcement service of abuse prevention orders and specific provisions for instances involving firearm surrender.
 - It is important to note that current law and this bill involve surrender of firearms, there is no broader authority granted to law enforcement to seize firearms.
 - Examining the firearm storage challenge both in the near term and the future. A potential near-term solution could include building a larger network of federal firearms dealers who could be contracted with for short term storage of any firearms surrendered. This system needs to be built out around the State in order for law enforcement to have reasonable access.
- I am happy to answer any questions the Committee has.