

## Gun Owners of Vermont

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**GOVT**

### Protecting Vermonter's Firearm Rights Since 1997

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Hello,

I am Bob DePino, Vice-President and Research Analyst for Gun Owners of Vermont. I see many new faces in Montpelier, but I see the same agenda.

I personally began my involvement in defending our rights to keep and bear arms, according to Article 16 of the Vermont Constitution and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment to the U.S. Constitution a decade ago in 2013. It started that year when anti-gun politicians, with Michael Bloomberg's financial and legal assistance, introduced a cascading list of gun control, that included an "Assault Weapons" ban, magazine restrictions, storage restrictions, gun registration, waiting periods, gun free school zones, and much more!

Here we are a decade later, with some of the very same politicians and anti-gun groups (some with new names) all still funded and controlled by the same out-of-state money, STILL pushing for even more restrictions!

Now many witnesses don't even write their own testimony, it is done for them by professionals, or done while away on training in places like New York or Boston. I understand, it is very difficult for individuals to create testimony that is concise, ordered, detailed and impactful. But for these national groups, it is much more important to get the national narrative straight. That's why we hear the same buzz-words, percentages and rates that we hear on the TV News.

As I have watched over the years, witness after witness who pushed the anti-gun agenda, have lied in committee after committee. The legislators that are supposed to deliberate over issues that have Constitutional impact, just smiled and rubber stamped the testimony right into a vote.

As a research analyst, it is my job to get our facts straight. Most of these witnesses have direct, or indirect connections, to one or more of Michael Bloomberg's anti-gun groups. Research used for testimony for increased gun control comes directly from academics funded by grants to one or more anti-gun groups such as Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, The Tides Foundation or an increasing number of smaller groups.

In 2015, after witnessing the public misinformation campaign of the Michael Bloomberg-funded GunSenseVT made during testimony and in social media, I began the re-information campaign, "GunSense's Lie Of The Day." It was an attempt to wake legislators up to the fact they were being lied to, over and over, by the groups that sole-purpose was to destroy gun rights in Vermont.

There were around ten of them and they entertained as well as informed. I hadn't thought of them since.

And then last week, during testimony on H.230, the bill demanding "Safe Storage" of firearms to reduce suicide, the Everytown for Gun Safety written testimony by Kendall Jacobsen, stated that even though all gun control laws will eventually be re-judged unconstitutional through the lens of the newest Supreme Court

decision (NYSR&PA vs Bruen), H.230 would “survive” the new scrutiny because, the new analysis “requires only that the government identify a well-established and representative historical analogue, not a historical twin.” He used the *Duke University Repository of Historical Gun Laws*, to identify historical Vermont gun control laws indicative of “firearm storage”, “five of which were in the great state of Vermont.” Testimony continued; that “[t]hese Vermont storage laws included a city ordinance providing requirements for safely storing gunpowder and other explosives to protect the public and levied a fine for violation. The ordinance even included specifications for storage containers.”

Sounds legitimate, but follow along and you will see how the mis-information by national groups work. The professional lobbyists know you are far too busy to question anyone’s testimony, and therefore trust them that the information was accurate and appropriate. So let me take a moment to explain the lie.

Simply clicking on the link provided in the testimony, one finds these five so-called “historical gun laws” include ONLY town ordinances on the MANUFACTURE AND BULK STORAGE OF BLACK POWDER FOR RETAIL SALE in Vermont:

**1.) An Act in Amendment of An Act to Incorporate the Village of St. Albans (1876):**

“To regulate the manufacture and keeping of gunpowder, ashes and all other dangerous and combustible material.”

**2.) Charter and Ordinances of the City of Rutland (1894):**

“No person shall keep in any building or place within the city, excepting in such magazine or place of storage as may be provided by or under the direction of the city council, any greater quantity than twenty-five pounds of gunpowder, nitro-glycerine or other like compound for a longer period than twenty-four hours. No person shall keep any gunpowder, nitro-glycerine or other like compound except in said magazine, unless it be placed and kept in safe metal, glass or stone canisters. No person shall, by artificial light, weigh or sell gunpowder in bulk, or in any other manner than by tight metal, glass or stone packages.”

**3.) Act of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Village of Northfield (1894):**

“Regulations for Handling Explosives... not, however, exceeding twenty pounds shall be kept in any one building at a time, and that to be kept in close metal cans, or flasks, which are not to be opened except in the day time... a sign with the words “LICENSED TO SELL GUNPOWDER.”

**4.) Act of Incorporation and By-Laws of the Village of Bradford. (1890):**

“The Trustees may grant licenses, for one year or less, to keep gun powder or gun cotton or other explosives for sale, if in their opinion the public safety is not endangered thereby.”

**5.) Vt. Acts and Resolves 145, An Act to Amend the Charter of the City of Montpelier, § 42. (1900):**

“Said board of fire wardens may inspect the manner of manufacturing and keeping gun powder, lime, ashes, matches, lights, fireworks or combustibles[.]”

So, you now see, these aren’t gun control laws.

These don’t INCLUDE a town ordinance, they are ALL town ordinances.

They are NOT related “to firearm storage.”

They are NOT related to the private use of firearms OR ammunition.

They do not apply to the average Vermont citizen.

They do not apply to separating personal firearms from ammunition.

They were not enacted to reduce suicide.

They were only addressing the BULK MANUFACTURE and RETAIL SALES of “black powder” in the days when fire departments used horse-drawn equipment. A fire or explosion in the city center could be devastating.

Black powder, for those of you who are unfamiliar with the product, is a highly flammable “low explosive” that, in large quantities, can be extremely devastating. Black powder is still used in small quantities to split large trees of diameters that exceed that of typical chain saws! Many videos of splitting trees in half can be found on YouTube and are quite entertaining.

Black powder was very easily ignited by a simple spark from two metal surfaces contacting each other, even the charter of Rutland specifically identified “artificial light” as unsafe to use around black powder!

This wasn’t “gun control,” “firearm control,” “Safe Storage of firearms” or anything related to keeping firearms away from suicidal Vermonters.

In fact, the historical record clearly shows quite the opposite. In a 2018 article by John McClaughry of the Ethan Allen Institute quotes Stephen Halbrook the leading historian on firearms in our nation’s history:

“The legacy of Ira Allen, founding father of Vermont, symbolizes the understanding of the right to keep and bear arms in the early republic. This legacy included his constant exercise of this right by carrying pistols for self-protection, his participation in the adoption of the Declaration of Rights which explicitly recognized this right, and his purchase and eventual distribution of 20,000 muskets to the populace. Pistols in the pocket and an arsenal at home were options available to every free citizen of the Green Mountain State.”

But, Bloomberg’s Everytown (who funds Mom’s Demand Action for Gun Sense, and controls GunSense VT) testified that these so-called GUN LAWS from the “Repository of Historical Gun Laws” would prove that gun control was alive and well in Vermont in the 1800’s (I believe the 1700s was mentioned in committee).

This is the level of dis-information being fed in committee to our legislators who are charged with making Constitutional laws that benefit the lives of Vermonters. These unified forces from outside Vermont have a national agenda that does not include the welfare of Vermonters. Ethan and Ira Allen defended Vermont against the Yorkers, the Allen Brothers would be quite upset to hear that the Governor of New York is still at war with Vermont and being aided by Vermont politicians.

Everytown, Moms Demand, Giffords, single, unified, national goal, is the destruction of the right to keep and bear arms.

If it wasn’t, they wouldn’t have to lie to you.

Thank you for your time,

Bob DePino

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