

Nate Biscotti

From: Ethan St. Amour <ethanstamour@cvsdvt.org>
Sent: Wednesday, March 11, 2026 9:47 AM
To: Nate Biscotti
Subject: [External] H.606 Public Comment

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Here is my testimony for the H.606 bill. Here is a link to the testimony, and it is also below: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1-c6n78GF2GbcjPsJhh7we9F1yNhnMXMu4MLAQ28WLQk/edit?tab=t.0>

H.606 Testimony

My name is Ethan St. Amour, and I am from Williston. I'm a son, a brother and a student. I am also a member of the Vermont chapter of Students Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, and we support H.606, which contains several important gun safety provisions.

Growing up, I had no personal connection to firearms. The fear of guns never once crossed my mind until I was about eight or nine years old. That changed in 2018; following the shooting at Parkland, the reality of gun violence was brought into focus. Since the day I first overheard those news reports, that fear has remained with me. In an era of viral social media and a rising frequency of school shootings, I often find myself consumed by "what ifs." While sitting in class, questions like "Where would I go?" and "What would I do?" cycle through my mind. This fear has become an exhausting part of my educational experience. I recognize that in Vermont, the issue of gun violence can feel distant compared to other parts of the country. I also respect our state's deep-rooted hunting traditions and understand that finding a middle ground is often challenging. With that being said, I believe the safety of students and the traditions of hunters do not have to be at odds. We all value life and the security of our communities. This is why I am asking you to support H.606. By addressing the possession of rapid-fire conversion devices and increasing accountability within the industry, this bill takes a necessary step toward modernizing our safety standards. It focuses on the types of technology that turn tragedies into mass casualties—tools that have no place in our schools or our communities. I urge you to prioritize these common-sense protections so that "Where would I go?" is a question no student in Vermont ever feels forced to ask again.

H.606 is a sensible, life-saving gun safety bill that would ensure people who have been found by a court to be a danger to themselves or others because of mental illness cannot purchase or possess a firearm, it would ban machine guns and other rapid-fire devices, and hold the gun industry accountable. We are advocating for these policies because they make our communities safer and help reduce gun violence.

Decisions made in the boardrooms of gun companies have a direct impact on our safety. Gun companies can choose to be part of the solution when it comes to reducing gun violence by securing their supply chains to prevent gun trafficking, not engaging in dangerous marketing, and taking reasonable steps to ensure their products don't end up being used to commit crimes. H.606 is an important step in this direction and would require gun companies to take these common-sense steps to save lives.

If a gun company chooses reckless practices over public safety, they should be held accountable in court. Every other industry, from Big Pharma to tobacco to makers of ordinary consumer products, has to answer for the harm they cause, and the gun industry should be no exception, even though federal law has given them special protection. Survivors of gun violence deserve their day in court to seek the justice they're owed. We support H.606 and its provision that would empower survivors of gun violence and our state attorney general to hold the gun industry accountable in court when it engages in business practices that harm our communities.

In Vermont, we're grateful that our state and local lawmakers have consistently prioritized gun safety in recent years. As a result of this progress, Vermont now has the 17th strongest gun safety laws in the country. But there's always more work that can be done to save lives. That is why I encourage you to vote yes on H.606.

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