



## Testimony in Support of H.B. 5540: An Act Concerning Ghost Guns and the Permit Application Process

## Testimony in Support of H.B. 5542: An Act Concerning Bump Stocks and Other Means of Enhancing the Rate of Fire of a Firearm

## Testimony Regarding H.B. 5556: An Act Concerning The Evaluation and Tracking of Prosecutions of Crimes Committed With the Use of a Firearm

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Judiciary Committee  
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Senator Doyle, Senator Kissel, Representative Tong, Representative Rebimbas and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am submitting this written testimony on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based child advocacy organization working to ensure that all Connecticut children have an equitable opportunity to achieve their full potential. The opportunity to be as healthy as possible is key among these and contributes to the ongoing success of children and their families. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in support of H.B. 5540 and H.B. 5542, and regarding H.B. 5556, each of which could have a significant impact on the health of Connecticut's families.

Death from gun violence constitutes a public health crisis in the United States where gun-related homicide and suicide rank among the top five causes of injury-related death.<sup>1</sup> Compared to other states, Connecticut has relatively low numbers of firearm deaths and analysis of Connecticut's gun control policies demonstrates that policy change at the state level is partly responsible for this low rate of firearm deaths.<sup>2</sup> Yet, 172 Connecticut residents still died from gun-related incidents in 2016 alone.<sup>3</sup> So, there is more work to do to safeguard the health of Connecticut's residents. Fortunately, strict firearm policies have proven effective at decreasing injury and loss of life.<sup>4</sup>

### Support of H.B. 5540: An Act Concerning Ghost Guns and the Permit Application Process

Permit-to-purchase firearm licensing reduces the rate of legally purchased guns that are diverted to criminals, reduces the rates of gun-related homicide and suicide, and is associated with lower risk of being shot in the line of duty for police officers.<sup>5</sup> According to a complex statistical model adjusting for differences between states, **Connecticut's permit laws successfully reduced firearm-related deaths by 40 percent over 10 years.**<sup>6</sup> While it is impossible to achieve complete prohibition of any human behavior, analyses of existing gun policies demonstrate that permit processes have a significant impact on the rate of homicide. This evidence suggests that closing loopholes that might allow for the purchase or printing of gun parts and then assembling a weapon without a permit could prevent deaths related to such weapons. Therefore, we support H.B. 5540, which would prohibit assembling a gun without a permit and ensure that police have access to the information needed to assess permit applications.

### Support of H.B. 5542: An Act Concerning Bump Stocks and Other Means of Enhancing the Rate of Fire of a Firearm

Mass shootings often involve weapons that can fire quickly and last year's mass shooting in Las Vegas was committed using a bump stock device.<sup>7</sup> Connecticut is no stranger to mass shootings, including the CT Lottery, Hartford Distributors, and Sandy Hook Elementary School incidents. In response, the state has already instituted strict restrictions on ownership of assault rifles.<sup>8</sup> Evidence of the impact of assault weapons bans and restrictions on gun modifications is limited. However, this ban on enhancing the rate of fire of a weapon is in line with Connecticut's other gun laws restricting access to weapons that can maximize the damage inflicted in a short time period. Evidence that permit laws lead to fewer gun-related deaths suggests that legal restrictions have a tangible impact on access to guns and even the National Rifle Association has, at times, supported a ban on bump stocks.<sup>9</sup> **We support H.B. 5542, which would prohibit the possession and sale of means to enhance the rate of fire of a firearm** and, as a result, limit the potential damage caused by a mass or accidental shooter in possession of such a device.

### Regarding H.B. 5556: An Act Concerning The Evaluation and Tracking of Prosecutions of Crimes Committed With the Use of a Firearm

Compared to research on other causes of death in the United States, research on gun-related injury, death, and crime is very limited and the number of active career researchers is small.<sup>10</sup> Tracking motor vehicle related injury and death has led to improvements in safety standards and robust evidence of which policies are and are not effective at reducing harm.<sup>11</sup> As noted above, gun violence constitutes a public health crisis in the United States and continues to result in injury and death even in states like Connecticut that have relatively low rates of firearm crime. Solid evidence to support or refute the impact of various aspects of firearm policy could improve public safety and expose inefficient, ineffective, or incomplete policies, enabling legislators to enact efficacious laws in response.

We urge the committee **to consider expanding this bill to track other data on gun-related incidents, including unintentional injuries and accidental discharges of weapons**, if feasible. We further suggest requiring that the annual analysis of such data be published online for public access. Such data could further illuminate the role of guns in both crime and perceptions of personal safety in our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of H.B. 5542, in support of H.B. 5540, and regarding H.B. 5556. I can be reached with any questions at [ksiegel@ctvoices.org](mailto:ksiegel@ctvoices.org) or at 203-498-4240.

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<sup>1</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2016). "10 Leading Causes of Injury Deaths by Age Group Highlighting Unintentional Injury Deaths, United States—2015." Retrieved from: [https://www.cdc.gov/injury/images/lc-charts/leading\\_causes\\_of\\_injury\\_deaths\\_unintentional\\_injury\\_2015\\_1050w760h.gif](https://www.cdc.gov/injury/images/lc-charts/leading_causes_of_injury_deaths_unintentional_injury_2015_1050w760h.gif)

<sup>2</sup>Rudolph, K., Stuart, E., Vernick, J. & Webster, D. (2015). "Association Between Connecticut's Permit-to-Purchase Handgun Law and Homicides." *American Journal of Public Health*. 105:8. Doi: [10.2105/AJPH.2015.302703](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302703)

<sup>3</sup>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC Wonder data search. Available at: <https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/datarequest/D76;jsessionid=3D2F65C13DE8B60E32BA19D0AB4FD072>

<sup>4</sup>Jehan, F., Pandit, V., O'Keeffe, T. et al. (2018). "The Burden of Firearm Violence in the United States: Stricter Laws Result in Safer States." *Journal of Injury and Violence Research*. 10:1. Doi: [10.5249/jivr.v10i1.951](https://doi.org/10.5249/jivr.v10i1.951)

<sup>5</sup>Center for Gun Policy and Research at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. (2016). "Permit-to-Purchase Licensing for Handguns." Retrieved from: <https://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-gun-policy-and-research/publications/PTP-policy-brief.pdf> and

Fleegler, E., Lee, L., Monuteaux, M. et al. (2013). "Firearm Legislation and Firearm-Related Fatalities in the United States." *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 305:9. Doi: [10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.1286](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamainternmed.2013.1286) and

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<sup>6</sup> Rudolph, K., Stuart, E., Vernick, J. & Webster, D. (2015). "Association Between Connecticut's Permit-to-Purchase Handgun Law and Homicides." *American Journal of Public Health*. 105:8. Doi: [10.2105/AJPH.2015.302703](https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302703)

<sup>7</sup> Buchanan, L. Grothjan, E. Huang, J. et al. (2018). "What is a Bump Stock and How Does it Work?" *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/10/04/us/bump-stock-las-vegas-gun.html>

<sup>8</sup> Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. "Special Licensing and Firearms." Retrieved from: <http://www.ct.gov/despp/cwp/view.asp?a=4213&q=494616>

<sup>9</sup> *New York Times*. (2017). "NRA Supports New Rules on 'Bump Stock' Devices." Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/10/05/us/las-vegas-shooting.html>

<sup>10</sup> Alcorn, T. (2016). "Trends in Research Publications About Gun Violence in the United States: 1960-2014." *JAMA Internal Medicine*. Retrieved from: <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2582987>

<sup>11</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Motor Vehicle Safety." Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/index.html>