



MARCH 12, 2024

TESTIMONY OF
KEITH CAGEL, PRESIDENT
FRIENDS OF CT SPORTSMEN
BEFORE THE
GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

HOUSE BILL 5488 AN ACT CONCERNING SECURITY OF CERTAIN ELECTION WORKERS
AND ELECTIONS-RELATED LOCATIONS

Co-Chairs Flexer and Blumenthal, Ranking Members Sampson and Mastrofrancesco, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Keith Cagle and I am President of Friends of Connecticut Sportsmen, a 501c4 established to advocate on behalf of the more than 100,000 sportsmen and women in Connecticut.

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 5488 An Act Concerning Security of Certain Election Workers and Elections-Related Locations.

This bill is clear and obvious attempt to disenfranchise law abiding gun owners by criminalizing their normal, legal behavior and setting them up for a law violation.

Most election activity takes place in schools, which are already “gun free zones” under the law. HB 5488 adds carrying a gun legally within 1000 feet of a drop box on days when absentee ballots are being collected or counted, and at early voting locations for elections, primary or referendum, for example.

Today, the public can’t even get a list of these locations on the Secretary of the State’s website. How will they know for sure they are in violation of the law when there is no definitive list of where people cannot go? Law-abiding gun owners should not face criminal penalties for simply crossing arbitrary lines with no intent to disrupt or interfere with the voting process.

In addition, last year the Legislature and the Governor criminalized open carry, so any justification for banning guns at amorphous locations based on “intimidation” is a red herring.

The bill creates an increasing the likelihood that someone will get shot. Ninety-four percent of the mass public shootings occur in places where civilians are banned from having firearms.¹ By making yet another area a gun-free zone, you’re advertising the vulnerability of those within that zone, because those are the specific areas criminals with ill-intent will target.

This bill appears to be a solution in search of a problem, based in fearmongering to sow division and resentment between the various political factions within the citizenry.

Respectfully, the people of the State of Connecticut expect and deserve more than political pandering in the lawmaking process. This General Assembly preaches rising above the partisan bickering in Washington, DC, but at the same time, gaslights its own citizenry by trumpeting misleading slogans and half-truths to sow division. It has to stop. It should stop here.

Thank you.

¹ Dr. John Lott, Jr. of [Crime Prevention Research Center](#) points out that research shows shooters select "gun-free zones" to minimize their chances of facing "civilian backlash."