



**Connecticut Citizens Defense League, Inc.**

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## **CONNECTICUT CITIZENS DEFENSE LEAGUE FILES FEDERAL CIVIL RIGHTS LAWSUIT TO PROTECT THE RIGHT TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS**

SOUTHURY, CT - The Connecticut Citizens Defense League (CCDL) announced today that it has filed a lawsuit in United States District Court against Governor Ned Lamont and several municipal police chiefs to stop their blatant and ongoing violations of the CCDL members' right to keep and bear arms, as well as other constitutional rights.

The CCDL was forced to bring suit after the Governor's March 17, 2020 Executive Order 7E suspended Connecticut General Statute § 29-17c, the law requiring state and local law enforcement to fingerprint, and process the applications of, Connecticut residents seeking State-issued permits to legally purchase and possess firearms, ammunition and magazines. As a result of the Governor's Executive Order, law enforcement throughout the state are refusing to collect fingerprints for firearms permit purposes, and are refusing to process firearms applications, even while fingerprinting and application processing continues for other purposes. Under Executive Order 7E, state and local law enforcement have effectively shut down the issuance of all firearm permits in Connecticut. The CCDL cannot allow such blatant disregard for its members' rights to go unchallenged.

The right to obtain and possess a firearm is a fundamental right guaranteed each citizen by the United States and Connecticut Constitutions. Especially in times of societal unrest, law-abiding citizens must have the ability to protect themselves and their families. However, under Connecticut's strict firearms permitting scheme, lawful persons seeking to purchase a firearm or ammunition, or to carry a firearm for personal protection, are required to hold a certificate or permit issued by the State. To obtain a certificate or permit, an applicant must first submit to law enforcement taking his/her fingerprints and conducting an extensive background investigation on the applicant. Now, state and local law enforcement have completely shut down even that narrow path for people to protect themselves and their families with a firearm.

The CCDL wrote Governor Lamont on April 10, 2020 seeking reinstatement of the fingerprinting and application process, and offering alternatives to the process. Sadly, the Governor never responded to, nor even acknowledged, the CCDL's letter, giving it no choice but to seek relief for its members in federal court.

Attorney Craig Fishbein and Attorney Doug Dubitsky are representing the CCDL in this federal civil rights action.

"While the CCDL understands these are times of unprecedented challenges, many Connecticut residents are being denied their constitutional rights just when they feel the exercise of those rights is most needed," said Holly Sullivan, President of the CCDL. "We respect the Governor's goal of mitigating the COVID-19 virus. However, stripping citizens of their rights does not further that laudable goal. It is in these extraordinary times that the Governor must most staunchly defend the rights of Connecticut's people. If the Governor won't, the CCDL will."

The Connecticut Citizens Defense League, Inc. is a non-profit, non-partisan, grassroots organization of more than 36,000 members, committed to protecting the unalienable constitutional right of all citizens to keep and bear arms through legislative and grassroots advocacy, education, research, publishing, legal action and programs.

Lawsuit documents can be accessed here: <https://ccd.us/legal-action/634-ccd-v-lamont>

**Press Conference by Zoom at 2pm on Monday, May 11, 2020 – Meeting Id: 443 999 1035 Password: CCDL2A**

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