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2021 PUBLIC HEARING GUIDE

Introduction

This is your complete guide to the Connecticut General Assembly Judiciary Committee Public Hearing on Friday, March 5, 2021 at 10:00 A.M. The public hearing can be viewed via [YouTube Live](#) and may be broadcast live on [CT-N.com](#).

Two ways to advocate for your rights at the public hearing.

- 1) Email written testimony by 8A.M. Friday, March 5, 2021 (earlier is better).
- 2) Sign up in advance to [testify virtually](#) via Zoom or telephone.

You do not need to be an expert to advocate for your rights.

If not you, then who? If not now, then when?

A short simple email or testimony is fine. Have questions?

CCDL is here to assist you, at legislative@ccd.us

CCDL's Legislative Coordinator Ray Bevis will be holding a virtual "Ask Ray" session on Tuesday, March 2nd from 7:00 P.M. - 8:30 P.M.

You can join by:

- [Zoom](#)
- [Facebook live](#)
- call in 860-800-CCDL



TAKE ACTION NOW! Step by step to protect your rights!

- STEP 1** Prepare your written testimony (preferably in Word or PDF format)
- STEP 2** Email your written testimony to: judgetestimony@cga.ct.gov
- STEP 3** cc: your testimony to *your state* Senator and Representative. [Find your Legislator](#)
- STEP 4** If you can, [testify via zoom](#) or telephone



STEP 1: How to prepare written testimony

- Keep it short, to the point and polite. Try to limit your testimony to one page
- Be clear whether you oppose or support the bills
- Give personal reasons why these bills are important to you
- Point out the effects these bills will have on you or groups of people
- Any testimony is better than none. Don't worry about the format
- View [Sample Testimony](#).or [talking points](#)

STEP 2: How to email your written testimony

- Email written testimony (preferably as a Word or PDF attachment) to the Judiciary Committee at: Judtestimony@cga.ct.gov
- Try to email your testimony at least 24 hours before the hearing

STEP 3: How to send a copy of your testimony to your legislator

- To find your State Legislator's email address:
 - Go to [Find your Legislator](#) at www.cga.ct.gov
 - Select your Town, Street, and enter your house number
 - Select 'Find'
 - Click on their title to email them
 - Let your legislator know you're a constituent that submitted testimony and if you signed up to speak at the public hearing

The screenshot shows the 'Find Your Legislators' page on the Connecticut General Assembly website. The page features a navigation bar with various menu items and a search bar. Below the navigation bar, there is a table listing legislators. The table has four columns: Name (Web), Title (Contact), Party, and Bills. Two red arrows point to the 'Title (Contact)' column for Gale L. Mastrofrancesco and Rob Sampson.

Name (Web)	Title (Contact)	Party	Bills
Gale L. Mastrofrancesco	State Representative, District 060	Republican	36 Bills
Rob Sampson	State Senator, District S16	Republican	146 Bills



STEP 4: How to testify in-person via Zoom or telephone

How to testify via Zoom

- To testify via Zoom **MUST** register in advance using the [On-line Testimony Registration Form](#)
- Registration will close on Thursday, March 4 at 3:00 P.M.
- If you're unsure if you will be available to attend, register anyway, you can cancel later
- After you register you will receive a pending approval email
- Before the hearing you will receive an email with the Zoom login and cancel information
- Prior to the start of the hearing check for the posted speaking order by visiting the Judiciary Committees testimony [website](#) and selecting the hearing date
- Be sure to login into Zoom ahead of when you will be testifying (about 12-15 speakers ahead of you, some may not be present and will get passed moving you up)
- Make sure to mute yourself and keep your camera off
- When you are called, unmute yourself, turn on your camera and begin your testimony
- Introduce yourself clearly and the town in which you reside
- Be clear on your position and what bills you are testifying on
- You will have three minutes to speak
- When finished wait a moment to see if any legislators have questions

How to testify via telephone

- To testify by telephone, call the Phone Registrant Line at (860) 240-5255 leave your contact information and what bills you wish to speak on
- If registered to testify via telephone you will receive a call prior to when it's your turn to testify
- When it is your turn to speak begin your testimony
- Introduce yourself clearly and the town in which you reside
- Be clear on your position and what bills you are testifying on
- You will have three minutes to speak
- When finished wait a moment to see if any legislators have questions



TIPS for testifying virtually

- First time testifying? Have NO fear, it is your right and you won't be the only first timer
- CCDL is here for you. If you have any questions [email](mailto:legislative@ccd.us) us at legislative@ccd.us
- Make sure you [registered](#) in advance
- State your name and town for the record
- Be clear on your position and what bills you are testifying on
- Testimony is recorded and part of the public record
- Do Not use the chat feature or any emoticons
- Know your audience! Most legislators have no firearms experience
- Most legislators believe the media and anti-gun rhetoric
- Make it personal, tell your story and why this important to you
- If asked a question be polite and direct
- If you don't know the answer, offer to research and get back to them
- Be aware of your surrounding light- face a window or have plenty of light
- Increase your bandwidth - limit the number of devices connected to the internet
- Speak to the camera and not the screen
- Dress appropriately, wear your CCDL shirt or hat
- Keep your microphone muted when not speaking
- Use a virtual background. If you do not want the inside of your house to be public
- Be mindful of your background or items that can be seen in the background
- Be mindful of your background noise when your microphone is not muted
- Position your camera properly, in a stable position and focused at eye level
- Prepare materials in advance- print out what you want to say



Preparing your testimony – Talking Points



OPPOSE

[HB 6355 AN ACT CONCERNING RISK PROTECTION ORDERS OR WARRANTS.](#)

Statement of Purpose of HB 6355:

To strengthen Connecticut's current [Firearm Safety Warrant Laws](#) by:

- (1) Establish a risk protection order and to expand upon the list of persons who may be complainants for purposes of issuance of a risk warrant.
- (2) Require the Judicial Branch to develop and make available a form and explanatory materials to persons applying for a risk protection order.
- (3) Disqualify persons subject to a standing risk protection order from possessing firearms or ammunition.
- (4) Penalize any such possession.
- (5) Establish a person whose firearms and ammunition have been seized can only transfer them to a federally licensed firearm dealer.

Who will be able to petition the court directly for a risk protection order in this bill?

Spouse, parent, child, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, step-parent, step-child, step-sibling, mother or father-in-law, son or daughter-in-law, brother or sister-in-law, roommates, person who has a child in common, dating or intimate partner, legal guardian or former legal guardian, a physician or physician assistant, advanced practice registered nurse, psychologist, clinical social worker.

Claims by the proponents:

- (1) Every 10 to 20 risk protection orders issued *ONE* suicide is prevented.
- (2) Cases in Stafford & Norwalk prevented a mass shooting.
- (3) Provides an avenue to petition that may not want to involve police because of stigmatizing mental health, immigration status or wariness of police.
- (4) The risk of fraudulent claims to gun owners is low.
- (5) Public safety is at risk if guns are returned without burden of proof there is no risk.



Counterclaims to the proponents claims:

(1) If suicides have been prevented under our current extreme risk warrant law, then our current laws in place are working.

If firearm suicide prevention is one of the intentions of this bill, then remove the unintended consequence of Public Act 13-3 that made firearm owners reluctant to seek mental health because of their concern of losing their firearms for six months if they're voluntary admitted for treatment.

By adding medical professionals to the list of people that can directly petition the court for a firearm seizure warrant without an investigation, will only make firearms owners even more reluctant to seek treatment.

(2) If cases of risk warrants have stopped mass shootings then our current law is meeting the needs of Connecticut residents.

(3) Police will be involved when serving a warrant. Police response will be even greater if not involved from the initiation of the complaint.

This will lead to an even higher police response when serving a firearm seizure warrant when they had no prior encounter with the person.

This bill will further stigmatize mental health or cause a person to become even more wary of police when multiple police units, or teams of law enforcement show up at their residence or place of employment.

(4) Fraudulent claims do happen in Connecticut. No one is prosecuted for perjury.

(5) Under current law firearms may be returned if after twelve months passed and there were no further claims, actions, or hospitalizations of "imminent risk". That should be proof that there is no longer an "imminent risk". The burden of proof should *not* be placed on the subject of the warrant.

Talking Points:

(1) Former partners, family members, or roommates seeking revenge could use this. There should be a penalty and prosecution for maliciously false accusations.

(2) When it comes to seizing guns through a petition, the standards that a judge uses should be high, and require facts, and investigation that show "an imminent and extreme risk" like under current law.

(3) This bill sets a precedent for the use of harsh measures against individuals not because they are alleged to have committed any crime, but because somebody believes or feels they might, someday, commit one.

(4) The court order authorized by this bill could be issued without any indication that the person poses an imminent threat to others.

(5) The court order would require the confiscation of firearms owned by the person and place the burden on him or her to prove by clear and convincing evidence that they should be returned.

(6) If a person's firearms are seized, those firearms, often family heirlooms should be able to be transferred to family members who can lawfully possess firearms.





SUPPORT

[HB 6491 AN ACT PERMITTING PERSONS TO PROTECT THEMSELVES USING NONLETHAL DEFENSIVE INSTRUMENTS.](#)

Statement of Purpose of HB 6491:

- (1) To remove the prohibition on possession of nonlethal electronic defense weapons.
- (2) Conform Connecticut law to the United States Supreme Court's ruling in *Caetano v. Massachusetts* finding bans on nonlethal defensive instruments to be unconstitutional.

Talking points:

Background: In 2013, Jaime Caetano of Massachusetts found herself homeless and in fear of her life after an altercation with an abusive boyfriend that put her in the hospital. Multiple restraining orders against her abuser, proved futile. When a friend offered Caetano a stun gun for self-defense, she accepted. After leaving work, Caetano's abuser was waiting for her. She displayed the stun gun and the abusive ex-boyfriend fled. However, under Massachusetts law the possession of the stun gun is a crime. When police discovered she had a stun gun, she was arrested and convicted. In 2016 the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously vacated the conviction of a Caetano.

- (1) The Court has held that the Second Amendment extends, to all instruments that constitute bearable arms, even those that were not in existence at the time of the founding.
- (2) Connecticut laws should not go against United States Supreme Court rulings.
- (3) If the fundamental right of self-defense does not include stun guns, then the safety of Connecticut residents is left to the mercy of state legislators that may be more concerned about disarming the people than about keeping them safe.

