



NEVADA FIREARMS COALITION

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March 14, 2013

RE: SB 221

Dear Senator Jones,

In response to your email of March 13, 2013, we appreciate your efforts to bring this bill's language into harmony with our founding documents, and this amendment is a great step forward for parts of this bill. We do have a couple of suggestions and comments for your consideration.

- As a suggestion under Sec. 9 NRS 202.360 subsection 2 (e) should be placed as a new 1(d) as part of subsection 1. Subsection 1 defines prohibited possessors and subsection 2 is concerned with mental illness.
- Do you mean in the text of subsection 3 that the felony provisions apply to a person who is listed in this subsection 3 (in country illegally)? Or to the Section 9 subsections 1-3? The wording appears to apply only to subsection 3 which means that persons identified in subsection 1 and 2 are not affected.
- Sub section 2 (a) includes the words "or has been committed to any mental health facility." Suggested language should read "or has been involuntary committed to any mental health facility." This reduces the reluctance to voluntarily commit oneself for evaluation. We believe that federal law uses the term "involuntary commitments."

In regards to the overall objective of this legislation (any many other bills), there are four primary areas that are of concern to society.

1. There are forces in the world and country that wish to do harm to innocent people for various reasons. Because they all break laws (sometimes many) to do such, they are all criminals, but if they do it for political or religious reasons they are called governments or terrorists; if they do it for personal gain they are common criminals; if they do it for rage or other unexplained reasons it is mental health.

2. This focus of this bill is to assist with the mental health aspect. There are three factors to the mental health issue (identification, assistance, prevention).

- First: To provide means, techniques and systems to identify those persons who need mental health assistance so they can obtain needed assistance, or before they become a danger to themselves or to the public.
- Second: To provide assistance to those who are faced with short term or long term mental health problems. This assistance would be to help them cope with and overcome their immediate short term and long term problems.
- Third: to prevent illegal activities and protect society while providing the criminally ill humanitarian treatment and containment. Identifying, treating and containing those who would do violence to society should be the objective of mental health regulations as far as public safety is concerned.
- These are the three areas which are the focus of our recommended study committee.

3. The next factor is how to prevent the groups identified in the first paragraph (1) from committing violent acts while not punishing society, nor denying freedoms. This is a question that has plagued mankind for thousands of years. Unfortunately in the mental health issue, all the focus on this area in this country has been firearms regulations. This is a disservice to the public and those who need help. We know from documented historical facts that gun control does not reduce violent acts against the public. There are many ways to carry out violent intentions and guns are only one of many tools available to the criminals and the criminally ill. In other countries, where guns are banned, violent acts are committed by the use of other devices such as knives, clubs, axes, etc. Even in this country, these tools account for more murders than firearms. So the challenge here is to not focus on firearms, but to devise means to prevent these attacks. Some means may include better police procedures, training and responses.

We also know that the biggest mass murderers in the 20th century have been governments, with an estimated 92 million killed after gun registration and confiscation.

4. The fourth factor is how to enable the public to protect itself while maintaining our freedoms? Government should be encouraging programs that emphasize self-discipline, personal responsibility, parental responsibility, acceptance of consequences for actions, and firearms safety. It must accept that people have the right to self-defense and encourage firearms training and other means for protection.

As a state police officer, I knew many times that my survival may very well depend upon the ability and desire of my fellow citizens to come to my defense. There will never be a military or police force large enough to provide protection without the assistance of their citizens. In this country, we need to ensure that our laws are just and fair so that our citizens trust their military and police to do them no harm.

The various state wildlife agencies have established hunter safety training programs and as a result have drastically reduced the number of hunting accidents while preserving the ability to use firearms to hunt. This is an excellent example of the positive benefits of a government program that looks at the problem as cooperation and education rather than control.

Encouragement of safety programs is a focus of the NRA and NSSF who train thousands of people each year in firearms safety. A program to encourage the use of gun safes in the home could be supported by the use of sales tax breaks for the purchase of gun safes, as an example.

We need to eliminate “victim zones,” those places where criminals know they won’t be thwarted by citizens able to defend themselves. Professor John Lott in his book “More Guns, Less Crime” proves that a firearm is used 70 times more to prevent a violent act than it is used. Personally I know of family members who have used firearms to protect themselves from home invasion and other evil acts. Without their ability to defend themselves, they wouldn’t be alive.

The mission and purpose of the Nevada Firearms Coalition is focused on the third and fourth factors mentioned above. To that end, SB 221 fails to address many of these issues, even with the most recent, but appreciated amendments. We still oppose this bill because of the language of the background checks, undefined definition for “transfers” and other reasons articulated in our original position statement.

Thank you for your concerns for this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Turner", is placed over a light gray rectangular background.

Don Turner, President