
WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF KATIE NOVOTNY IN OPPOSITION OF HB21

January 19, 2024

I am a law abiding gun owner, advocate for the right to self-defense, certified range safety officer, and a competitor in firearms competition. I oppose HB21.

I believe we can all agree that straw purchases are bad, and that they often put guns in the hands of those who cannot have them. It is also a crime which is difficult to prosecute. Furthermore, as a misdemeanor, an officer must witness this crime taking place, which would be incredibly rare, or they must obtain a warrant for arrest. This bill seeks to remove the requirement for a warrant. I believe that would be a mistake.

Straw purchases are not generally urgent crimes that are unfolding and developing so quickly that a police officer does not have time to get a warrant. If an officer has enough evidence and reason to believe that a straw purchase has taken place, it is not difficult for them to present that evidence to obtain a warrant.

Without this check in place, officers may make arrests for this without adequate evidence. There is already deep mistrust between the police and many communities. These are also the same communities that are likely to be targeted for straw purchase arrests. We saw the outcome with the Gun Trace Task Force when there was policing without adequate oversight, let's not crawl down that same path again.

Retaining the requirement for a warrant for an arrest for straw purchases will protect the due process rights of individuals, and will not prevent arrests and convictions when adequate evidence to obtain a warrant is present.

Because of these reasons above, I request an unfavorable report.

Katie Novotny

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