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## CONNECTICUT CHAPTER OF THE SOCIALIST RIFLE ASSOCIATION

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March 9, 2026

### An Open Letter to the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Committee on the Judiciary RE: Opposition to H.B. 5436 — An Act Amending Certain Firearms Definitions

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee,

We respectfully urge the Committee to **issue a “No Report”** on  
*H.B. 5436, An Act Amending Certain Firearms Definitions*

While public safety is a shared priority for all Connecticut residents, this proposal raises serious concerns regarding constitutional rights, statutory clarity, and the practical effectiveness of the proposed restrictions.

First, the bill would broadly prohibit the manufacture, sale, and distribution of firearms defined as “convertible pistols,” which are described as semiautomatic pistols that can be modified through the addition of a conversion device. This approach **will affect a wide range of commonly owned handguns**, which were never designed to be illegally modified in this way, and which are lawfully possessed by responsible citizens throughout Connecticut. By targeting a broad class of firearms, rather than the unlawful use of conversion devices themselves, the legislation pre-emptively penalizes and potentially criminalizes currently lawful owners and retailers complying with existing regulations.

Second, federal law already strictly regulates machine guns and conversion devices. Devices commonly referred to as “auto sears” or “Glock switches” are **already illegal under federal law**, and their possession can constitute a serious federal felony. The proposed legislation therefore appears largely duplicative of existing enforcement tools, while potentially expanding criminal liability to individuals who have no intent to violate the law.

Third, Connecticut already maintains some of the most restrictive firearms regulations in the nation. Before adopting additional prohibitions affecting law-abiding residents, the legislature should carefully consider whether the proposal meaningfully addresses criminal misuse of firearms, or whether it **primarily burdens those who already comply with the law**.

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THE SOCIALIST RIFLE ASSOCIATION IS A NON-PROFIT, MEMBERSHIP-BASED ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO UPHOLDING THE RIGHT OF THE WORKING CLASS TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS, AND TO PROMOTE THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS FOR SELF AND COMMUNITY DEFENSE. WE WANT TO BUILD AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE CONSERVATIVE, REACTIONARY RIGHT-WING GUN CULTURE REPRESENTED BY ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE NRA.

THE SOCIALIST RIFLE ASSOCIATION’S MISSION IS TO UPHOLD THE RIGHT OF THE WORKING CLASS TO KEEP AND BEAR ARMS AND MAINTAIN THE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SELF AND COMMUNITY DEFENSE.



## **Changing Demographics of Lawful Gun Ownership**

The Socialist Rifle Association is a not-for-profit 501(c)(4) social welfare organization, dedicated to advocacy and education for all aspects of self and community defense, especially in regards to firearms ownership and training for vulnerable and marginalized communities. **We view lawful firearm ownership as an essential component of our civil liberties and personal autonomy.**

Our organization's growth & engagement is emblematic of the increasing number of Americans who identify as Democrats or politically left-of-center who are becoming firearm owners. Gallop Polling shows that Firearm ownership among Democrats has increased from 22% in 2012 to 29% in 2022<sup>1</sup>. Which is corroborated by a similar survey<sup>2</sup> from the University of Chicago. While we do not have data for 2025-2026 yet; public sentiment and reporting from journalistic outlets like NPR's "Why More Liberals Are Buying Guns"<sup>3</sup>; suggests that this trend is increasing rapidly. The SRA nationally has had over 1,000 new members join our organization in the first 2 months of 2026 alone.

This new trend of Firearm ownership is being adopted by individuals within communities that are under threat, **including LGBTQ individuals, women, racial minorities, and working class urban residents** seeking a safeguard for personal security and civil liberty. These vulnerable populations can no longer rely on the immediate protection from the state; in fact, many are being actively and illegally attacked by agents the federal government itself. State legislation that expands criminal definitions related to firearms or firearm components **will disproportionately affect individuals in our vulnerable communities** that increasingly rely on lawful self-defense.

These developments underscore an important reality: **lawful gun ownership is not confined to a single political or cultural demographic.** Most members of our organization are registered Democrats and Independents, who vote in Democrat primaries, and broadly support progressive candidates across Connecticut.

For these reasons, the Committee should carefully consider whether *H.B. 5436* would unintentionally **disarm members of communities who may already feel vulnerable to violence or discrimination**, including many Democratic voters who exercise their constitutional rights responsibly.

Public policy should be guided by measures that directly target criminal activity while preserving constitutional protections. Broad prohibitions on commonly owned firearms undermine public confidence in the legislative process, fail to address the root causes of violent crime, and make our already threatened marginalized communities more vulnerable to attack.



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### Political Accountability

Finally, it must be stated clearly that voters across Connecticut are paying close attention to this issue. Should this legislation be reported favorably out of committee, many constituents—including all members of the Connecticut Socialist Rifle Association—will view that decision as a direct attack on their rights.

**Accordingly, we will actively oppose the reelection of any member of this Committee who votes to advance H.B. 5436.** Public officials are accountable to the people they serve, and those who choose to advance legislation that infringes upon fundamental rights should expect to answer to voters for that decision.

For these reasons, We respectfully request that the Judiciary Committee decline to advance this legislation and issue a **“No Report” on H.B. 5436.**

Thank you for your time, your public service, and your careful consideration of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

**125 Members of the Connecticut Chapter of the Socialist Rifle Association**

1 Cam Edwards (November 24, 2024) *Gallup Survey of Gun Owners Offers (Mostly) Good News for 2A Supporters*. Bearing Arms. [https://bearingarms.com/camedwards/2024/11/24/gallup-survey-gun-owners-n1226972#google\\_vignette](https://bearingarms.com/camedwards/2024/11/24/gallup-survey-gun-owners-n1226972#google_vignette)

2 NORC at the University of Chicago (March 24, 2022) *One in Five American Households Purchased a Gun During the Pandemic*. NORC. <https://www.norc.org/research/library/one-in-five-american-households-purchased-a-gun-during-the-pande.html>

3 Frank Langfitt (January 11, 2026) *Why More Liberals Are Buying Guns*. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2026/01/11/nx-s1-5611025/why-more-liberals-are-buying-guns>