

Hillary Shende
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LD 22

Senator Beebe-Center, Representative Salisbury, and members of the Committee on Criminal Justice and Public Safety, my name is Hillary Shende, and I am here to testify in favor of LD 22.

As I am sure you all know, to be designated a “prohibited person” you have to have a record of violent behavior. It’s obvious that anyone with a such a record shouldn’t have access to firearms. Yet many do! In a state without universal background checks, it’s easy as pie for a prohibited person to simply buy their weapon of choice at a gun show or through a private sale, or even borrow one from a family member! No background check for these types of transactions means the seller doesn’t know that the recipient is a prohibited person, and so weapons easily end up in the wrong hands, wreaking havoc on innocent people.

Well, with the passage of LD 22, that can change. Suddenly the seller will have a vested interest in making sure he’s not selling to a prohibited person, else he be prosecuted himself! This might incentivize gun sellers to insist on background checks, even if they’re not required by law. It will also make it less likely that relatives will lend their weapons to family members if they know that the recipient has had a run in with the law. An uncle might think twice about letting his ne’er-do-well nephew borrow his rifle, now that the uncle’s got skin in the game. He might pause to reflect on just how his nephew’s girlfriend got that black eye a month ago, or why the nephew suddenly had to report to court last week. Hmm...

Will this bill end gun violence? No. But it will stop some gun violence. And with gun violence the huge national problem that it is, we need every possible policy to curtail it. Please vote yes on LD 22. Thank you.