



Cumberland County District Attorney's Office

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Chairs Senator Carney and Representative Kuhn, honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Jacqueline Sartoris, and I am the District Attorney of Cumberland County. I am here today offering support for this proposed legislation, LD 1126.

My support for this bill is about two things: enabling essential law enforcement investigations and providing parity for law-abiding gun owners. Naturally, my primary focus is on law enforcement investigations, as that is my purview.

Serial numbers on firearms are crucial in law enforcement investigations and successful prosecution of criminal cases. A serial number allows an investigator to have a starting point in the ownership of a firearm that has been used in the commission of a crime. This identifying information is the most fruitful way to lead down the path of gun ownership to a potential suspect. This information is also vital in ruling out uninvolved people along that path. Information is crucial to developing evidence which can rule in or rule out potential defendants.

A serial number can help ascertain if a gun was sold, stolen, illegally transferred, or used in other illegal activities. Serialization also allows stolen guns to be reported to the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, which helps aid in the recovery of stolen firearms and restoring them to their rightful owner.

I'd like to remind the Committee that while crime rates and prosecutions have decreased over the past several years, the incident of crimes committed with firearms has increased. This is a matter of particular concern for us in Cumberland County, with an increase in reports of gunfire together with an increase in the almost casual showing of firearms in situations such as road rage and other threatening situations. Guns are more involved in criminal matters than ever.

In addition, ghost guns in particular are of concern. As you know these firearms can be 3-D printed without serial numbers in the complete privacy of a home or business - are extremely concerning to those of us in law enforcement because they permit ready access to often highly sophisticated firearms which have no identifying information for use in potentially illegal, even lethal, activities. Following the murder of a healthcare CEO in New York this past December with a ghost gun, I hope we are all more alert to the frightening possibilities these untraceable guns pose in enabling the commission of heinous acts with the possibility of permanent anonymity. If not for the missteps of the perpetrator in that case in failing to discard the firearm, it would likely remain unsolved.

While those with something to hide are highly motivated to possess and use firearms without serialization, law-abiding citizens have no reason to fear a requirement to serialize firearms and to prohibit undetectable firearms.

I support making firearms used in criminal conduct more likely to be traceable in subsequent investigations, and to level the playing field for law-abiding citizens who wish to sell or pass on their firearms to do so.

Thank you for your time.

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