

# Judiciary Committee

## JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-7042

AN ACT CONCERNING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FIREARM INDUSTRY

**Title:** RESPONSIBILITY ACT.

**Vote Date:** 4/7/2025

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/12/2025

**File No.:** 766

**Disclaimer:** *The following JOINT FAVORABLE Report is prepared for the benefit of the members of the General Assembly, solely for purposes of information, summarization and explanation and does not represent the intent of the General Assembly or either chamber thereof for any purpose.*

### SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

### CO-SPONSORS:

Rep. Geraldo C. Reyes, 75th Dist.  
Rep. Steven J. Stafstrom, 129th Dist.  
Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist.  
Rep. Hector Arzeno, 151st Dist.  
Rep. Jonathan Steinberg, 136th Dist.  
Sen. Ceci Maher, 26th Dist.  
Rep. Matt Blumenthal, 147th Dist.  
Sen. MD Rahman, 4th Dist.  
Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey, 133rd Dist.  
Rep. Patricia A. Dillon, 92nd Dist.  
Rep. Bob Godfrey, 110th Dist.  
Rep. Nick Gauthier, 38th Dist.  
Rep. Jillian Gilchrest, 18th Dist.  
Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist.  
Rep. Sarah Keitt, 134th Dist.  
Sen. Derek Slap, 5th Dist.

### REASONS FOR BILL:

Because it is so difficult to prevail in civil lawsuits against bad actors in the gun industry, the protections available to individuals harmed by companies in other industries are largely out of reach for victims of gun violence. The state of the law is uncertain, in part because of a

federal statute passed by Congress that conveys exceptional protections to the gun industry, blocking many lawsuits and disincentivizing many others. Therefore, this bill would expand the ability of victims and/or the Attorney General to bring civil lawsuits against the firearm industry for illegal conduct.

#### **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

The substitute language makes slight revisions to lines 32-33, as well as wording changes to lines 29 and 47.

#### **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

**Attorney General William Tong:** Attorney General Tong submitted testimony in support of this legislation because it seeks to hold irresponsible gun manufacturers, marketers, and distributors accountable. He explained that the 2005 Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act shields the firearm industry from nearly all liability when it comes to civil suits, which prevents the state from cracking down on these dangerous practices. He believes that passing this legislation will ensure Connecticut remains a national leader in enacting strong gun control laws for the rest of the country to adopt.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**Alinor Sterling, President, Connecticut Trial Lawyers Association:** Alinor Sterling submitted testimony in support of this legislation because it provides additional paths for victims of gun violence to hold the firearms industry responsible for dangerous and irresponsible conduct in the sale and marketing of firearms. This ensures that victims of gun violence, due to dangerous marketing and sales practices, get their day in court.

**Karen Edwards, Md, MPh:** Dr. Edwards supports this legislation because it will prevent harm to the state's residents by firearms. As a pediatrician, she believes that firearms pose a significant risk to the health and safety of children because guns are the leading cause of death in this country for individuals up to the age of 19.

**Po Murray, Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance:** Po Murray submitted testimony in support of this legislation because gun manufacturers and dealers should not be allowed to prioritize profits over public safety while fueling an epidemic that kills hundreds of people in this state every year. They believe the PLCAA has caused significantly more harm than good because it has allowed gun manufacturers to hide behind federal protections.

**Other testimony:** Due to the quantity of testimony received for this bill, it is not possible to provide a written summary for each individual submission. Of the remaining testimonies in support of the bill, the following was expressed:

**39** pieces of testimony were submitted **in support** of this legislation.

## NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

**Rob Sampson, State Senator, CT-16:** Senator Sampson submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation because he believes it is a bad faith effort to place undue liability on the firearms industry, which is an assault on lawful commerce, personal responsibility, and constitutional rights. He believes this bill will set the precedent that will kill the firearms industry in Connecticut, which will put citizens at risk.

**Matthew Strasser, Legislative Coordinator, CT Citizens' Defense League:** Matthew Strasser submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation because it aims to restrict gun sales and gun ownership in the state. They believe that the best approach to reducing crime is to crack down on the criminals and perpetrators, and not the individuals who supplied the weapon.

**Martin Weiss, Esq.:** Martin Weiss submitted testimony in opposition of this legislation because it is an attempt to attach civil liability to a gun store for the actions of criminals. He believes that in no other industry are the distributors and marketers of products held responsible for the use of such, and that this will take a significant toll on merchants who follow existing law.

**Zachary Pearson, Owner, Swamp Yankee Arms LLC.:** Zachary Pearson submitted testimony in opposition to this legislation because it would cause significant harm to the gun industry in CT and the small business owners who sell guns directly to customers. He believes that this legislation could drive the gun industry out of state.

**Other testimony:** Due to the quantity of testimony received for this bill, it is not possible to provide a written summary for each individual submission. Of the remaining testimonies in opposition to the bill, the following ideas were expressed:

**277** solely expressed their opposition to this legislation.

**308** expressed their opposition to the bill, citing the transfer of accountability and liability from a criminal to a law-abiding business owner.

**94** expressed their opposition to the bill, citing potential economic consequences this legislation could result in.

**86** expressed their opposition to the bill, citing concerns regarding violations of the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution.

**64** expressed their opposition to the bill, citing the specific example of the alcohol and automobile industries not facing liability in the instances of deaths due to driving under the influence while intoxicated.

**50** expressed their opposition to the bill, citing a lack of effectiveness of this law as written.

26 expressed their opposition to the bill, citing violations of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA).

3 expressed their opposition to the bill, citing concerns over self-defense.

1 expressed their opposition to the bill, citing taking a mental health focused approach to gun control.

**Reported by:** Griffin Olshan

**Date:** April 23, 2025