



Luke A. Bronin
Mayor

March 5, 2018

The Honorable Dannel P. Malloy
Office of the Governor
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Joseph Aresimowicz
Speaker of the House of Representatives
Legislative Office Building, Room 4105
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Martin M. Looney
President Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building, Room 3300
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Matthew D. Ritter
House Majority Leader
Legislative Office Building, Room 4106
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Robert Duff
Senate Majority Leader
Legislative Office Building, Room 3300
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Themis Klarides
House Minority Leader
Legislative Office Building, Room 4200
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Leonard A. Fasano
Senate Republican President Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building, Room 3402
Hartford, CT 06106

The Honorable Kevin Witkos
Deputy Senate Republican President Pro Tempore
Legislative Office Building, Room 3400
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: National Rifle Association's Role in Firearms Permitting

Dear Governor Malloy and Legislative Leaders,

Connecticut has become a national leader in gun safety thanks to your efforts to pass common-sense laws that restrict access to military-style weapons, guarantee appropriate background checks and registration requirements, and keep guns out of the hands of abusers and others who should not have access to them.

Efforts to pass similar common-sense laws at the national level have failed in large part because of the immense political power of the gun lobby, specifically the National Rifle Association (NRA). The NRA may once have focused on promoting responsible gun ownership, but today

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they serve as lobbyists for the gun industry and as intransigent opponents of common-sense reforms to America's gun laws.

I am concerned that Connecticut is inadvertently supporting this organization, by providing it recognition in State statute. Connecticut requires individuals to go through training before obtaining firearms permits. State statute mandates that in order to receive a pistol permit, residents must complete a training course "utilizing instructors certified by the National Rifle Association," or a State agency.¹ The State Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection explicitly refers residents interested in obtaining a pistol permit to complete "a handgun safety course, which must consist of no less than the NRA's 'Basic Pistol Course,' prior to submitting the application."²

It is strange and concerning to me that Connecticut's statutes and policies serve to elevate and legitimize the NRA. The independent Connecticut businesses that provide firearms training are not subsidiaries of the NRA and they do important work, but because of state statute and policies, their instructors must get training from the NRA. It is both unnecessary and unacceptable for the NRA to have such status in Connecticut law. As a result, residents are effectively required to subsidize the NRA and its agenda.

We can ensure the responsible businesses that train residents in gun safety are prepared to provide appropriate training without involving the NRA or similar groups, and we should. I am asking the General Assembly, in partnership with the State Police and any other appropriate agencies, to call for development of a curriculum that instructors can use to teach safe operation and storage of guns, as well as Connecticut laws related to legal gun use – as the statute already allows. In addition, the legislature should amend the current statute to remove any reference to the NRA, and to eliminate the NRA's role as a certifying organization.

Without common sense gun laws at the national level, residents of the City of Hartford and of our state as a whole will continue to see guns from states with weaker gun laws used in crimes. And without changes in Connecticut law, our residents will be required to support the organization most responsible for opposing much-needed reforms.

I know that each of you takes gun safety very seriously and that you care deeply about doing everything we can to reduce gun violence. Separating groups like the NRA from the firearms permitting process and removing the NRA's special status in State law will allow Connecticut to improve the training residents seeking permits receive, and will ensure that Connecticut is not inadvertently legitimizing or supporting the NRA. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Luke A. Bronin
Mayor

¹ General Statutes of Connecticut, Title 29, Chapter 529, [Sec. 29-28](#).

² State of Connecticut, Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, "Special Licensing and Firearms: Connecticut State Pistol Permit," [November 30, 2017](#).