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## **Testimony in Support of SSI for SB 2**

### **May 17, 2023**

*The League of Women Voters believes that the proliferation of handguns in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens.*

We support this bill for many reasons but will focus on a few. First, guns are killing our young people. According to research as of July 2022, “For the first time, gun-related deaths surpassed motor vehicle accidents as the top cause of death for those under 19 years old.” (See Note 1)

In fact, we should treat gun violence as an epidemic. We learn from the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence that: “When compared to other communicable and infectious diseases, gun violence often poses a larger burden on society in terms of potential years of life lost. In 2019, firearm deaths accounted for 925,023 years of potential life lost before the age of 65 – more than diabetes, stroke, and liver disease combined.” (See Note 2)

SS 1 for SB 2 offers a way for Delaware to begin to emerge from this threat.

Opponents of the bill may look to the U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* (2022) to make the argument that the Second Amendment provides a constitutionally protected right to carry firearms in public. (See note 3)

However, what they do not point out is that, as part of the 6-3 majority in *Bruen*, Justice Kavanaugh, joined by Chief Justice Roberts, emphasized that the decision was not intended to invalidate other restrictions on gun ownership including fingerprinting, background checks, mental health evaluations, mandatory training requirements, and other requirements.

Justice Kavanaugh wrote that “[p]roperly interpreted, the Second Amendment allows a ‘variety’ of gun regulations.” Justice Kavanaugh also made clear that “[T]he Court’s decision does not prohibit States from imposing licensing requirements for carrying a handgun for self-defense,” The opinion of Justices

Kavanaugh and Roberts is pivotal because without these concurring Justices there would not have been a majority opinion.

Rather than support the opponents of this bill, the full set of opinions in *Bruen*, in the League's view, lends additional support to the reasonable and rational training and permit-to-purchase embodied in this bill.

We urge you to support SS1 for SB 2 and release it to the full House.

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NOTES:

- (1) "Gun Violence: The Impact on Public Health," **National Institute for Health Care Management** (July 12, 2022). <https://nihcm.org/publications/gun-violence-the-impact-on-public-health> (accessed May 15, 2023)
- (2) "Public Health Approach to Gun Violence," **The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence** (February 2021). <https://efsgv.org/learn/learn-more-about-gun-violence/public-health-approach-to-gun-violence-prevention> (accessed May 15, 2023)
- (3) New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc., et al. v. Kevin P. Bruen, in His Official Capacity as Superintendent of New York State Police, et al. Docket no.20-843. Decided June 23, 2022