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LWVSC Testimony on S.440

Veterans Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Family and Veterans' Services Committee

The League of Women Voters does not support this bill. It provides that every person 18 years of age or older who is otherwise eligible to have firearms has a right to furnish himself with:

(b) any firearm protected by the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution, including, but not limited to, any firearm that some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a well-regulated militia, that is any part of ordinary military equipment, or that could contribute to the common defense;

However, it is the national position of the League of Women Voters that:¹

The proliferation of semi-automatic/automatic weapons in the United States is a major health and safety threat to its citizens. The League supports strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of these weapons by private citizens. The League supports regulating firearms for consumer safety.

An "unorganized militia" consisting largely of untrained and unsupervised persons, as described in this bill, should not have a right to unrestricted personal possession of weapons designed for the efficient and rapid killing of large numbers of people. Our military, our national and state guards, and our law enforcement community do not provide untrained and unsupervised access to weapons of this kind. They recognize that modern weapons of war require secure storage, extensive training, supervision in use, and authorization for use only through legitimate public authority. The "unorganized militia" meets none of these conditions.

Further, our military weapon systems are constantly increasing in sophistication and in efficiency in killing. We might not imagine what sophisticated weapons might fall under the protection of this bill in the future, just as our ancestors who wrote our constitutions did not contemplate the semi-automatic and automatic weapons that we have today.

Uniquely among developed nations, our children and innocent adults lose their lives every day to weapons designed for the purpose of killing other humans efficiently. We ask that you not give a favorable report to this bill that would only reinforce that devastating reality.

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¹ League of Women Voters of the United States, Impact on Issues 2022-2024, p. 154.
https://www.lwv.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/LWV_ImpactOnIssues2022-2024.pdf