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April 4, 2023

LWVSC Testimony before a Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on S.127, S.638, S.109

These bills represent very different approaches to the control, or lack of control, of gun access.

It is the national policy of the League of Women Voters that access to firearms should be regulated for public safety.<sup>1</sup> Reason tells us that those individuals who present a high probability of using a weapon in ways that are a danger to the public should not be given access to weapons.

We recognize in S.127 very helpful additions to the criteria that disqualify an individual from acquiring firearms, including such essential classes of individuals as those adjudicated as mentally defective and those who present a credible threat to the physical safety of another. It is especially important that the bill extends excluded weapons from "handguns" to "firearms." In the past, long guns such as rifles and shotguns were seldom seen outside the context of recreational hunting. Those days are long past. Long guns of various kinds, including semi-automatic, have become a major element in threats to public safety.

S.638 provides for voluntary waiver of firearm rights. It would not substitute for appropriate involuntary restrictions but the potential to prevent suicides fully justifies its passage.

Finally, S.109 removes requirements for permits and associated training to carry firearms. This will only amplify the already terrible cost of excessively open access to firearms in this state. The existing training and permit requirements are constitutionally sound and must be retained for the protection of the public. Our nation is already unique among developed countries in exposing our people to the danger of gun violence. The cost of this bill would be more innocent lives lost. That cost is too high.

In summary, we recommend forwarding S.127 with a favorable recommendation. S.638 could be helpful. S.109 is not just unnecessary but would add to the horror of gun violence in this state and should not move forward; the League strongly opposes this last bill.

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<sup>1</sup> League of Women Voters of the United States, "Impact on Issues," Pp. 153-155.  
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