

Good morning Honorable Senators and listening and viewing audience. My name is Mary Moorhead. I am a registered firearm owner, and I appear before you today in support of Bill No. 36-0144 because I believe that responsible gun ownership and reasonable firearm regulations can and should go hand in hand.

Owning a firearm is a responsibility that I do not take lightly. Like many law-abiding firearm owners, I value my constitutional rights and take pride in handling and storing my firearms safely. I do not view this legislation as an attack on the Second Amendment or on responsible gun owners. We must do everything possible to keep guns out of the hands of criminals, individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others, and other bad actors.

Supporting stronger gun laws does NOT mean opposing the rights of responsible gun owners. It means supporting measures that promote accountability, improve public safety, and help law enforcement prevent gun violence before it occurs. As a gun owner myself, I understand that with the right to own firearms comes a responsibility to ensure that those firearms are used, stored, sold, and transferred safely and legally.

I especially support the firearm safety training requirement for initial licensure. Many firearm-related incidents are the result of a lack of knowledge, negligence, or improper storage, rather than intentional criminal behavior. By ensuring that firearm owners receive proper safety training, we can reduce preventable tragedies, promote responsible gun ownership, and see a future where firearms are treated with the seriousness and respect they demand. Safe handling practices not only protect the gun owner, but also family members, children,

neighbors, and the broader community. These are standards that responsible gun owners should welcome.

Over the years, the Virgin Islands has experienced far too much gun violence. Every time there is a shooting in the territory, we all wish something could be done. Families, children, businesses, and entire neighborhoods have felt the devastating impact. We should not accept these tragedies as normal. Strengthening our gun laws is one step toward increased public safety while preserving the rights of law-abiding citizens.

Again, Bill No. 36-0144 is not about taking firearms away from responsible owners. It is about ensuring that firearm ownership is accompanied by appropriate standards and precautions that protect the public. As registered gun owner and a proud Virgin Islander, I support efforts that make our community safer and strengthen confidence in responsible gun ownership.

Senators, I respectfully urge you to support Bill No. 36-0144 and demonstrate that protecting public safety and respecting the rights of responsible gun owners are not mutually exclusive goals—they are complementary ones.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Respectfully,

  
Mary Moorhead