

Public Safety and Security Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-5177

AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE AND USE OF CERTAIN NONAERIAL AND

Title: NONEXPLOSIVE CONSUMER FIREWORKS.

Vote Date: 2/29/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable Substitute

PH Date: 2/20/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Travis Simms, 140th Dist.

REASONS FOR BILL:

Many consumers in the state of Connecticut have expressed their want to purchase non-aerial fireworks in the state of Connecticut for numerous celebratory events throughout the year. Many of our bordering states allow the sale and purchase of these items forcing consumers to travel across state lines if they wish to acquire them. This bill would not only allow these consumers the freedom to purchase these non-aerial fireworks within their home state, but also would allow the state of Connecticut and the businesses that reside here to benefit financially through state sales tax and retail sales. Additionally, these types of nonaerial fireworks are used in celebrations such as Diwali (an Indian Celebration). This would allow the Indian Community to freely purchase these items for their celebrations enriching their local communities.

Substitute Language:

Raises the age the person may sell nonaerial/nonexplosive fireworks, sparklers, and fountains to 18. Adds the option for a municipality, to adopt an ordinance prohibiting the sale, exposing for sale, purchasing, or possessing with the intent to sell nonaerial/nonexplosive fireworks in places of public assembly by a vote of its legislative body. The bill defines this as: fairs, carnivals, craft shows, music events. Adds a provision of sale of these fireworks on municipal, educational, and commercial property.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Ronnell Higgins, Commissioner, DESPP, Opposes:

The inherent dangers of using fireworks are great and their use should not be left to the general public. Firework use should be left to the professionals who are trained, licensed and regulated to use them safely so as to not endanger the lives and property of the citizens of Connecticut.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Mike Dapkus, President, Dapkus Fireworks, Supports:

Presently all these proposed devices are legal and sold in 48 states including our border states of New York and Rhode Island. These are also referred to as Safe & Sane Fireworks by many states including the State of California. Beyond the 4th of July, the biggest consumer of these proposed devices is the Indian community which celebrates Diwali. These devices are traditional with this celebration and commonly used safely by families throughout the world. These devices have the lowest injury rate according to the US consumer Product Safety Commission.

Desai, Rajiv, Founding Member and President, Vallabhdham Temple, Supports:

This proposed bill will expand the use of snappers, glow worms, ground spinners, smoke balls and party poppers that are commonly used in our traditional Diwali celebrations. These items are nationally recognized as a Safe and Sane, novelty, or non-aerial or non- explosive fireworks, but unfortunately, they are presently banned in Connecticut. All these proposed items in HB5177 are also legal in 48 states including our boarding states of New York and Rhode Island. For years we have traditionally used these items during Diwali, in India, by all families without incident.

Eric Turner, Director of Governmental Affairs, American Promotional Events, Supports:

Expresses the safety of such products listed in this bill backed by the 48 states that legalized them. With this, Connecticut's retailers, and sales tax gain will increase while consumers will be able to celebrate holidays such as Independence Day safely without needing to drive across state lines.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

CT Police Chiefs Association, Opposes:

Certain agencies depending on the area that they patrol, encounter more frequently than others the use of these fireworks which causes a disturbance for residents and officers alike. These calls for noise complaints divert law enforcement resources from other calls of service that are more needing of public safety concern.

Roger Nelson, Vice President, CT Fire Marshals Association, Opposes

The sale and use of these items cannot be supported by Connecticut Fire, Police and Emergency Service Organizations, as the use of consumer grade fireworks and novelty items pose an inherent danger and an increase in injuries to the citizens who we protect every day.

Reported by: Casey Urso (Assistant Clerk)

Date: March 11th, 2024