

Public Safety and Security Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-140

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING THE SALE AND USE OF CONSUMER FIREWORKS.

Vote Date: 2/29/2024

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/20/2024

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Rep. Kurt Vail, 52nd District

Rep. Mark W. Anderson, 62nd District

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill establishes that the term Consumer Fireworks has the same meaning as provided in 27 CFR 555.11, as amended from time to time and does not include sparklers or fountains. Any one at the age of twenty-one or older may purchase possess or use consumer fireworks. No person shall sell consumer fireworks unless they hold a valid federal fireworks license, or a valid state license to sell consumer fireworks. Fee for issuance or renewal of a license shall be \$1,500. This bill's purpose is to expand the sale and use of consumer fireworks in the state. It also states where the business is located and any structural requirements as applicable to the State building fire and safety codes as well as zoning codes and ordinances. This bill also determines criminal checks needed preceding licensure.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

None Expressed

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

CT Police Chiefs Association (CPCA): Testified via correspondence and in representing all interest of the police chiefs in the state, overseeing the operations of over 7,000 law enforcement personnel and close to 100 law enforcement agencies they, collectively, *oppose this bill*. The association testified that the bill is of concern to the CPCA because it will allow

residents to purchase and use commercial grade fireworks of a certain size. They fear that passing this bill will result in increased calls and injuries due to misuse of these products, not to mention disturbance for residents and officers alike. These calls will also divert law enforcement resources from other calls.

Roger Nelson, Vice President – CT Fire Marshals Association: Opposes this bill.

He testified via correspondence and in person that this bill and H.B 5177 are a step backwards in public safety for Connecticut. He also testified that consumer grade fireworks are dangerous and pose a public safety concern. They should be limited to use by those who are properly trained. He also indicated that according to CPSC from 2006 to 2021, there were approximately 150 structure fires with 2 related fatalities and an average of 39 reported injuries attributed to the use of consumer fireworks in CT, and Nationwide there has been an increase of approximately 25% in fireworks injuries.

Ronnell Higgins, Commissioner – Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection (DESPP):

The commissioner opposed this bill via correspondence. He testified that since the sale and use of Sparklers and Fountains in CT became an exemption to the law prohibiting fireworks in CT the number of personal injuries and incidents of structure fires has risen in the state. He also testified of a 24-year-old young man of Wolcott traveled to New Hampshire and purchased illegal fireworks which he set off at a private party and suffered serious injuries that required hospitalization and debilitating injuries when fireworks exploded near his chest and face. He also testified about other fatalities around the state including an 18-month-old toddler in Meriden, and a 19-year-old woman in Southington who were both asleep in their beds.

Reported by: Michelle Adams

Date: 3/11/2024