

Citizen Statement on HF 601 “Mandatory Lost and Stolen Reporting”

To Whom it May Concern:

I find it ethically immoral to criminalize victims for not reporting their victimhood in an amorphous “practicable” timeframe if they “should have reasonably known” it was stolen. Who exactly is the arbiter of these standards? The devil is often in the details; I would urge the committee to use more specific language rather than paint with a broad brush. Surely the State should seek out and prosecute the person(s) that stole any firearm and do their utmost to find and hold those individuals to account rather than seek to punish victims. We do this with no other crime. The precedent of criminalizing victims for not reporting is a dark and dystopian path and I urge you -- in the strongest possible terms -- to not walk down it.

Finally, I would suggest you look at data. And in the absence of data, to think logically. What is the problem we are seeking to solve here? How many people are withholding the fact that they have been robbery/theft victims, firearms being involved or not? My most charitable reading of this bill is to presume that it is an attempt to curtail or dissuade straw purchases; an activity that is already illegal. Those willing to engage in criminal activity are not going to be dissuaded by another piece of legislation that is entirely redundant. The possibility, however, of criminalizing legitimate victims that are already traumatized is a real and likely outcome.

Sacrificing victims in an attempt to catch the criminals is not the way to accomplish anything legitimate. Focusing on the outcome you want does not wash your hands of establishing a process that is ethical. We cannot view the punishment of victims for not reporting as a legitimate means to any end.

I do not support this bill.

Regards,

Michael Li

Minnesota Resident