

JOHN SPIROS

State Representative • 86th Assembly District

December 18, 2013

Testimony on Assembly Bill 368

I would like to begin by thanking the committee members for allowing me to speak today in favor of Assembly Bill 368.

Assembly Bill 368 is a simple bill that brings Wisconsin law in line with the 42 other states that allow their residents to purchase rifles and shotguns in any state. Wisconsin currently only allows residents to purchase long guns in bordering or contiguous states, a restriction that dates back to 1968. In 1986, the federal Firearm Owners Protection Act allowed states to drop this constraint, so it is safe to say Wisconsin has not updated their legislation on this matter in over twenty years.

If AB 368 were to pass, sales made in other states would still be required to comply with state and federal law. Since they would no longer be limited by geography, Wisconsin residents would have a greater selection of long guns to choose from and would be able to choose from a greater number of retailers, ensuring that Wisconsin residents will be given more options, and this will benefit our hunters and Wisconsin's sporting heritage.

Thank you and I will be happy to take any questions at this time.

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MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 18, 2013

TO: Committee on Natural Resources & Sporting Heritage

FROM: John Commerford, Wisconsin State Liaison

RE: Assembly Bill 368

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I appreciate the opportunity to address you this morning on an issue important to NRA members and gun owners throughout Wisconsin. My name is John Commerford and I am here today on behalf of the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action to express our strong support for this legislation. This common sense legislation addresses an antiquated law that all but a handful of states have corrected in recent years.

Current Wisconsin law arbitrarily restricts residents to purchases of long guns only in Wisconsin and contiguous states. This antiquated restriction is a holdover from a time before federal law allowed for interstate purchases of rifles and shotguns, and a national background check (for all purchasers of any firearm from every gun dealer in all states) was required. This overdue legislation would repeal those sections of state code that limit Wisconsin residents and allow gun owners in this state the same freedoms that the vast majority of other states currently enjoy.

Currently, there are only ten states that do not allow the purchase or sale of long guns to law-abiding citizens in non-contiguous states and efforts are underway to make the necessary changes in most of those states.

This bill does not affect or change the process gun owners go through to purchase long guns in any state including Wisconsin. Purchasers of these types of firearms would still be subject to the same National Instant Background Check that current law requires. Also, transfers under this legislation would still be subject to the laws in the state of the purchaser and those in the seller's state.

The bill before you today is similar to legislation we have seen throughout the country to update the code to reflect changes in federal law. Since this bill does not change the process of purchasing a firearm and maintains the same federal standard currently in place nationwide, we rarely see opposition to this type of legislation. This common sense legislation will help bring Wisconsin into conformity with the overwhelming majority of states and reflect changes in federal law since this statute was written.

On behalf of the National Rifle Association and gun owners throughout Wisconsin I respectfully request your support of Assembly Bill 368 and ensure that antiquated state statute does not arbitrarily limit the rights of those who wish to purchase firearms.

Thank you for your consideration.