

Dear Ms. Diehl

I will not be able to attend the hearing on Thursday relating to the proposed Burlington Charter changes, but I would appreciate it if you could pass this communication on to the members of the Committee.

I am no longer on the Burlington City Council, but during my tenure, I sat on the Charter Change Committee which drafted the proposed changes. These issues were fully vetted, and we invited responses from the public to the proposals. The citizens of the City have made it clear that they want these changes incorporated into the legal framework for our municipality.

It is regrettable that the laws regulating a municipality's authority to regulate gun possession have the mis-nomer of the "Sportsman's Bill of Rights." As is apparent with even a casual review of the proposals, they have absolutely no impact on the ability of any Vermonter to engage in hunting.

Some members of the legislature have publicly expressly concern that the adoption of these charter changes would provide a "patchwork" of gun regulation. I do not believe that such a particularized approach to a specific concern of a municipality should prompt a negative response. The purpose for allowing chartered municipalities to seek changes to their charters is to address specific concerns. In this case, as a measure of their concerns about the health and welfare of Burlington, its citizen want to have common sense and reasonable regulations.

There have been horror stories circulated by the opponents of these measures as to the impact of these proposals. If the charter changes were approved, and these dire circumstances in fact took place, it would be a simple act for the General Assembly to revoke the charter changes.

I suggest that the actual reason that the opponents to these measures are so adamantly against them is that they fear that, if enacted, the charter changes will prove over time to have no negative impact upon Second Amendment rights or the ability of Vermonters to pursue game and waterfowl.

Please give due deference to the voice of the citizens of Burlington.

Norm Blais