



February 8, 2017

The Honorable Strom Peterson  
JLOB 324  
PO Box 40600  
Olympia, WA  
98504-0600

**RE:** **HB 1134 (Peterson) Banning Firearms in Common Use**  
**POSITION:** **OPPOSE**  
**LOCATION:** **House Judiciary**

Dear Representative Peterson,

On behalf of the members and supporters of the Firearms Policy Coalition, I submit our full opposition to HB 1134, a measure which bans the sale, use, and possession of semi-automatic firearms and their components of common use for lawful purposes. This cynical measure creates felonious criminal liability for untold tens of thousands of Washingtonians for mere possession of common arms and parts.

HB 1134 is an overly broad and unworkable measure that does nothing but create criminals out of otherwise lawful residents, while attacking their property rights and their right to keep and bear arms by prohibiting the manufacture, possession, importation, transfer, sale, or purchase, any “assault weapon” or “large capacity magazine.” These commonly owned firearms with widely accepted cosmetic or safety features would become contraband, creating a host of new victimless crimes, adding to the burden of Washington State’s already overcrowded prison system.

This measure is short-sighted in its attack on civil rights, callously throwing our family, friends, and neighbors in prison, ruining lives and communities. Cheekily re-assigning a new politically-constructed label to these common and protected arms does not absolve the legislature from the long-term fiscal and social costs of creating non-violent, victimless crimes out of thin air, and, directing them at our state’s law-abiding gun owners.

This crass attack on the enumerated right to keep and bear arms also effectively reverses two recent laws passed by this body—with veto-proof majorities—regarding the sale and use of short barreled rifles and suppressors.

The long and convoluted list of cosmetic or safety features that encompass this new political term-of-art will be a bureaucratic and enforcement nightmare. Our laws, and the institutions that make, regulate, and enforce them must have a certain level of respect from those who are expected to obey them. They must make sense and be of benefit to an ordered society. HB 1134 fails on all counts and must be rejected by the committee as it is not drafted in such a way as to engender the respect of, nor the consent of, the governed.

For the reasons listed above we oppose the passage of HB 1134, or any other similar attempts to undermine the fundamental human right to self-defense or the enumerated right to keep and bear arms. We urge the committee to reject those measures that seek to target and incarcerate gun owners for meaningless, politically-driven “crimes.”

In Freedom,

/s/  
Philip Watson  
Rights Advocate

Cc: House Judiciary Members, Speaker of the House, House Minority Leader