

Testimony in Favor of HB 1387: “AN ACT repealing limiting liability for certain design features of firearms”

Rep. Timothy Horrigan (Strafford 10); January 14, 2025

House Criminal Justice Committee

This bill would, if passed into law, repeal RSA 507-D:6, which was enacted this past May as part of HB 551 (2025.) HB 551 was strongly supported by our state’s firearms manufacturers, including SIG SAUER USA which is headquartered in the next town over from mine, and which is a major local employer. They threatened to move to another state if we failed to pass HB 551. I didn’t want that to happen, but I thought their threat was an empty one. And, I think HB 1387 is a good bill.

RSA 507-D:6 is a bad law for many reasons, The first reason is because people should be able to seek redress if they are harmed by unsafe firearms, including firearms rendered unsafe by flawed designs which could have been made safer if certain safety features were included.

There are many other reasons which this is a bad law. Perhaps the biggest reason is the fact that it is totally unnecessary.

Firearms companies such as SIG SAUER USA already have broad civil liability protection here in New Hampshire thanks to a law passed back in 2004, i.e., RSA 508:21. SIG SAUER USA has been in recent years plagued by lawsuits related to their popular P320 pistol (which is the civilian version of the military’s M17 sidearm.) There have been many cases where P320’s and M17’s have been fired unintentionally. The numerous related lawsuits have all, to the best of my knowledge, been filed in federal court or in other states’ courts, but not in our own courts. Even before last May, existing New Hampshire state law shielded SIG SAUER USA from civil liability— but only in New Hampshire state courts. Before and after May 2025, state law didn’t— and still doesn’t— in any way prevent litigants from seeking relief in courts outside New Hampshire.

Regardless of the committee members’ feelings about RSA 508:21, or about the many federal lawsuits related to the P320’s design, everyone should agree that RSA 507-D:6 does nothing useful. It should (in my opinion) be taken off the books.