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Three Gun Bills Shot Down in Colorado House Committee

The gun lobby is nothing if not relentless, repeatedly pursuing an agenda for more powerful guns present in more places and carried by more people. Wednesday, three bills towards that end were defeated in the House State, Veterans, and Military Affairs Committee. Overwhelmingly, opponents to the bills, including gun owners, embraced a theme that more guns do not make us safer.

SB17-005 was purportedly about training school employees, but parents and education organizations saw that it actually provided a whole new pathway for bringing guns into schools. Ken Toltz of Safe Campus Colorado asked "Where are the school board members?" In fact, only six people spoke in support of the bill, none were school board members, educators or even described themselves as parents. Nineteen spoke against the bill.

Marnie Kamensky of Colorado Ceasefire shared that "In armed confrontations, highly trained police officers hit their target only 20% of the time," and posed the question as to what would happen in a crowded classroom with a minimally-trained teacher shooting at an assailant.

SB17-006 would have allowed military teenagers to obtain concealed carry permits. Testimony of two former military officers shared their discomfort with arming youth off-base. Several legislators indicated they were deferring to defense department directives in rejecting the proposal.

SB17-007 would have repealed Colorado's high capacity magazine ban. Bill sponsor Lori Saine referred to the 2013 ban as "the most ridiculous bill in state history." Her co-sponsor Stephen Humphrey claimed that his constituents were angry about the ban, but apparently not angry enough to show up. Only three people spoke in support of repeal, all lobbyists or leaders of gun rights organizations. Twelve spoke for keeping the magazine ban.

In February when SB17-007 was on the senate floor, senate sponsor Vicki Marble emphatically stated that gun owners are owed an apology. Ceasefire believes that if there is any apology due, it is to those who have lost loved ones in mass shootings employing high capacity magazines, three of whom testified at tonight's hearing (Survivors of Columbine High School, the Aurora Theater and Sandy Hook Elementary). Tom Mauser, whose son Daniel, was shot and killed at Columbine pleaded with legislators to "please vote like it's your loved one in the theater."

Colorado Ceasefire, an all-volunteer statewide organization, has been fighting for freedom from gun violence since 2000. Ceasefire initiated and was instrumental in the enactment of the 2013 Colorado firearms laws, which included universal background checks, a high capacity magazine ban, and domestic violence firearms relinquishment.

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