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July 1, 2010

Honorable Joel Sheltrown
Chair, House Committee on Tourism, Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources
House Office Building
Lansing, MI

Dear Representative Sheltrown and Members of the Committee:

The Michigan National Organization for Women **opposes passage of HB 5972 and HB 5973** because de-regulating pistol licensing in Michigan will lead to more gun violence and victimization of women and children.

The federal Brady law only covers about 60 percent of gun sales through licensed gun dealers. The Brady check on licensed gun sales does not pick up Sexual Assault Personal Protection Orders, Stalking PPOs, and persons charged with misdemeanors or felonies. The other 40 percent are private sales not regulated by federal law but by current state law. These two bills reduce the licensing process to mere registration. Commonsense safeguards such as exist in current law help protect the public, especially women, and are still needed.

Firearms- especially handguns- were the most common weapon used by males to murder females in 2003. (*When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2003 Homicide Data: Females Murdered by Males in Single Victim/ Single Offender Incidents*. September 2005. Violence Policy Center. Washington, DC. Available at: http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2005.pdf.)

A recent study shows that access to firearms increases the risk of intimate partner homicide more than five times compared to instances where there are no weapons. In addition, abusers who possess guns tend to inflict the most severe abuse on their partners. (J.C. Campbell, Webster J, Koziol-McLain, CR, et al. 2003. *Risk Factors For Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From A Multi-Site Case Control Study.* American Journal of Public Health. 93 (7).)

In 2002, background checks noting domestic violence misdemeanor convictions and restraining orders kept 22,000 abusers from purchasing firearms. (*Background Checks for Firearm Transfers, 2002, BOJS; Disarming Domestic Violence Abusers, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence,* September 2003.)

Michigan NOW is the largest multi-issue women's rights advocacy group in Michigan. We thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Mary Pollock
Legislative Vice President

NOW's purpose is to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men.