



The New Hampshire
House of Representatives

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House Rules Committee Approves Late Drafting Request for Bipartisan Legislation
to Address Mental Health Policies

Concord, NH: House Criminal Justice and Public Safety Chairman Terry Roy (R-Deerfield) and Representative David Meuse (D-Portsmouth) released the following statement after the House Rules Committee approved the late drafting request of bipartisan legislation by unanimous vote. The bill would address the law relative to involuntary mental health commitments and firearms purchases:

Chairman Terry Roy said, "This important bipartisan legislation will bridge a gap that exists in current law regarding involuntary mental health commitments and firearms purchases. While federal law makes it unlawful for someone with dangerous mental health challenges to purchase or possess a firearm, it provides no mechanism to enforce it." He continued, "This is an important piece of legislation that would ensure two things. First, those who are involuntarily committed to psychiatric care will no longer be able to purchase firearms until they get the care they need. Second, once that occurs and it is determined they are no longer a danger to themselves or others, it will provide a pathway to ensure their rights are restored."

Representative David Meuse added, "It is worthy of note, that we recognize the stigma that is all too often attached to mental illness and that our goal with this law is not to make things worse. I look forward to working with my Republican colleagues, victims of gun violence, and mental health providers to draft language that protects the general welfare without further stigmatizing mental health conditions or violating individual freedom, as 40 other states across the country have done."

Chairman Terry Roy concluded, "After decades of war, there are likely many thousands of veterans who served and as a result, now suffer from PTSD and other mental illnesses. Nothing in this law should discourage them from seeking the help they deserve. We will not be taking the rights of our veterans merely because they asked for help. This bill will apply only to people who are involuntarily committed and are either unable or unwilling to seek treatment on their own."

"This effort for the NH Legislature to work together is a direct response to the complex issue of mental health and the intersection of firearms. After the tragedy that happened at New Hampshire Hospital - that took the life of former Chief of Police, Bradley Haas - we want to ensure the safety and protection of all citizens with a respectful approach."

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