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June 16, 2021

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capital Building
Albany, NY 12224

RE: New York State Senate Bill S7196/Assembly Bill A6762

Dear Governor Cuomo,

I am writing on behalf of the Orleans County Legislature regarding the above referenced Bills which seek to impose liability on law-abiding businesses and individuals for the criminal misuse of firearms. I am respectfully urging you to veto this legislation

If those bills are signed into law, they will be extremely detrimental to New York's economy, as they target both large and small businesses, especially those located in Upstate New York, and including some located in and near Orleans County.

For example, while the publicity surrounding these bills has tended to focus on large-scale corporate manufacturers and distributors of firearms, the bill's broad definitions of "gun industry member" and "firearm" are so expansive as to potentially allow costly lawsuits against any individual or small business engaged in the lawful sale of common hunting and self-defense firearms, ammunition and / or accessories. This includes "mom and pop" sporting goods stores (in Orleans County and elsewhere) that sell such products. Such suits will no doubt be very expensive to defend, forcing many businesses to settle even meritless claims for substantial sums to avoid the risk inherent to such litigation. Even the threat of such lawsuits, frivolous or otherwise, could cause small businesses serious economic detriment, through costly insurance premiums, reduced productivity and / or diminished competitiveness. This, in turn, will reduce the employment opportunities that such small businesses provide upstate residents.

In terms of larger businesses, as you no doubt know, many firearms manufacturers have already left New York in recent years and this law is likely to only increase that trend. For example, Rem Arms LLC ("Remington Firearms") is a major employer in Herkimer County. They are a significant contributor to the viability and stability of both the county and state economy and provide hundreds of families in that region with a comfortable middle-class lifestyle. Signing this legislation into law is likely to force the closure of the Rem Arms LLC facility in Ilion, causing

employee terminations and significantly affecting the taxpayers of that county and the surrounding area.

Additionally, if these bills are signed into law, it may set a negative precedent of liability on other lawful businesses for the criminal misuse of their otherwise legal products, such as car dealers, alcohol and liquor producers and marijuana growers and sellers.

Given your stated stance of being a strong proponent of growing the state's economy, I hope that you will heavily weigh the injurious effect this legislation will have on New York State and its businesses, large and small.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lynne M. Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the closing "Respectfully yours,".

Lynne M. Johnson
Chairman of the Legislature
Orleans County

cc: Orleans County Clerk of the Legislature
Herkimer County Clerk of the Legislature