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A bill that might have saved a lot of people from gun violence in Hartford died in the state House of Representatives on April 28 when the majority voted against it.

The bill, An Act Concerning Lost and Stolen Firearms, would have been a step toward getting guns off the streets of Hartford and other cities in Connecticut.

The bill would have required gun owners to report stolen or lost guns within 72 hours after finding them missing. The reason for this bill was to prevent gun owners from selling them illegally to criminals.

According to Connecticut Against Gun Violence, a group that supported the bill, illegal firearms are used in over 2,000 crimes every year in Connecticut.

Rep. Mike Lawlor, the Democratic co-chairman of the House Judiciary Committee who spoke in support of the bill, said law enforcement officials have been trying to pass this law for almost 10 years. It just hasn't gotten enough votes in the legislature.

It's a shame that politicians, our leaders, know that there is plenty of crime in the city where they work, but they don't take enough time and effort to pass a bill that might make a difference. Almost all of Hartford's state representatives voted in favor of the bill — all but one: Rep. Minnie Gonzalez. She abstained from voting and was among a very few urban politicians across the state who either abstained or voted against the bill.

It seems like every time a bill about getting guns and crime off the street

comes up in the legislature, it dies.

Lawlor explained why these bills only go so far.

There's this big organization of dues-paying gun owners called the National Rifle Association (NRA), and when I say they make a difference in the voting on bills like this one, they do.

The NRA believes strongly that the 2nd Amendment of the Constitution guarantees everyone the right to have a gun. The NRA's goal is to protect the 2nd Amendment, which says, "A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed."

So, when they hear of people trying to pass bills that limit guns in any way, they call up their local and state politicians and tell them to vote nay, or no, against bills like An Act Concerning Lost and Stolen Firearms.

Often, the NRA even donates money to politicians' campaigns to get them to vote the way the NRA tells them to.

The NRA needs to realize we're living in a new world; we don't live in the 1700s or 1800s anymore.

The 2nd Amendment of the Constitution is old and needs to be amended and clarified, because people everywhere, not just in Connecticut, are using guns more than they need to and for the wrong purposes.

In Hartford, police say there are hundreds of gun-related crimes every year that they have to deal with.

I hate to say it, but the majority of the time the guns used in crimes are stolen guns or the people using them don't have a license.

On top of that, in 80 percent of the gun crimes, teens and young adults are involved.

So, the question is, would a bill like An Act Concerning Lost and Stolen Firearms help take guns off the street to prevent crime?

In my opinion I think that it would have been a step toward getting people to obey the laws and make them think twice before they take a gun and sell it to someone who is going to do the wrong thing.

Lawlor said he thought it was the best-written bill he'd seen in a long time to get guns off the street.

But, he also noted that politicians could have done more to write an even better bill so that it would pass.

Our politicians and communities need to work together to make a difference in the fight against gun violence.

Sooner or later, the NRA and the bill's opponents in Connecticut will find out that they need to get serious and stop illegal gun trafficking. ■

