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**Live Fire Training Requirements
Meeting Minutes for Public Hearing #1
Thursday May 29, 2025
*Via Microsoft Teams***

I. Call to Order

EOPSS Deputy General Counsel John Melander introduced himself and offered opening remarks at 10:05 AM. He also read directly from the section of Chapter 135 of the Acts of 2024 which required the hearing for which the public was gathered. After those remarks and informing the public of the procedure for making a public comment, Attorney Melander opened the floor to the public.

II. Public Comments

The public comments of the hearing commenced with GOAL member Mike Harris who shared his concerns regarding “range deserts” in reference to the lack of public ranges in Massachusetts. He referenced Boston as an example of an area with no accessible ranges. Mr. Harris shared that without public ranges, there is an expected cost to use private ranges which could lead to affordability issues. Also from GOAL, Executive Director Jim Wallace, commented that the public hearing should have been done in person, in multiple locations throughout the state, so that government officials could tour ranges and meet with staff and members of various ranges.

Eric Mabie is a member of a gun club in North Leominster. He spoke about the need to close ranges if there is live fire training going on. Mr. Mabie questioned if these requirements would lead to an increase in commercial insurance costs due to increased liability. He lastly shared that many ranges are non-profits and solely for training purposes.

In his first comment, Tom Cheffro from Boston Firearms criticized the legislature for not following or listening to the voices of gun owners and instructors. He argued that the regulation decisions should be made by instructors and must differentiate based on the kind of gun and other case-by-case details.

A comment in favor of live fire training came from Greg Hammel of Swampscott. He believed live fire is critically important. Mr. Hammel spoke of his experience seeking out classes that teach live fire and how they used multiple calibers to properly instruct the students.

In his first statement, firearms instructor John U. agreed that more live fire training is fine. However, he questioned the meaning of a grid minimum.

In his first remarks, Michael Jaffe criticized any comparison of obtaining a firearms license to obtaining a driver's license. He argued that one (driving) is a privilege whereas the other (bearing firearms) is a constitutional right. He believed the minimum requirements for live fire training must be tailored or else the entire system would be useless.

Licensed firearms instructor Jim Dicecca offered remarks that emphasized the lack of access to public ranges in Massachusetts as a key problem. Mr. Dicecca also argued that these regulations are a solution to something that is not a problem as live fire is already a large proponent of firearms training in the Commonwealth and licensed individuals are often canvassed to see what training they have had.

In his first comments, Jeffery Sachs criticized the "regulations" as premature. He questioned what this will look like in the Commonwealth and argued it has discriminatory features relating to location and cost for firearms owners.

Firearms instructor Derek Hubbel also criticized the improper comparison of obtaining a license to carry to a driver's license. He claimed that driving is a right, yet not a constitutional right like the ability to carry a firearm. Mr. Hubbel emphasized the lack of accessibility of ranges, specifically for constituents who live in cities such as Boston.

In his first comments, firearms instructor Charlie (last name unknown) spoke about the increased financial burden this "regulation" would place on citizens. He shared that the process of obtaining a firearm and a license to carry is already \$800-\$1,000 expenditure. He highlighted the burden the "regulations" would also place on instructors to oversee the live fire trainings. Finally, he suggested the training should only be one round.

Firearms instructor Mike Pacek expressed his frustration that the standard of proposed live fire training had not yet been set. Mr. Pacek argued it is difficult to provide public comment before this standard is created. He emphasized the prevalence of live fire already occurring throughout the Commonwealth citing that there are 30,000 live fire trainings per year.

In his first remarks, Len Segal of the NRA and a Massachusetts State Police instructor spoke about the lack of available time and facilities to practice live fire, sharing that most ranges do not allow practice before class or until after individuals have obtained their license to carry. Mr. Segal noted that the NRA suggests using a .22 caliber for training. Mr. Segal concluded his comments by noting that many ranges in Massachusetts are surrounded by residences.

Firearms instructor Mike Meunier provided support for live fire training yet argued that the mandate poses challenges. Mr. Meunier highlighted his concerns over accessibility for those with disabilities and questioned if there were any accommodations to ensure this training is equally accessible.

In his first statement, firearms instructor Tom Stevens emphasized the unclear mandate requirements and questioned who would be taking and teaching these courses. Mr. Stevens also argued the requirements are cost prohibitive.

In his first remarks, police officer and firearms instructor Dan Simmler questioned what the goal of live fire training is? He argued that if it is for safety, this is not an issue for those who are looking to obtain a license to carry. He claimed that there should be a safety concern for those who are unlicensed. Mr. Simmler also questioned how the costs would be mitigated and what the testing accuracy standard would be for citizens. Mr. Simmler suggested the “regulations” should focus more on safe operation and cleaning instead of shooting.

Senator Joan Lovely posed a question regarding where one could practice safely if prices were too expensive at local ranges.

In his second comment, Michael Jaffe wanted to clarify the difference between a driver’s license and a firearms license. Owning a firearm is a constitutional right whereas having a driver’s license is a privilege.

Firearms instructor Mike Fitzpatrick argued that firearm training is like driver’s education with an academic course and live instruction. He suggested that the live fire should consist of one shot into a water tank.

In his second statement, Dan Simmler emphasized that live fire training occurs in a controlled environment and questioned if there would be liability issues for the instructor if the citizen were to improperly use their firearm later.

Firearms instructor Christian Antriazzi emphasized the lack of public access to ranges in the Commonwealth. Mr. Antriazzi shared that Framingham has no classroom space for firearm training instruction so the overall training would have to occur at multiple locations. He also noted the potential problem of ranges not allowing the set shooting standard of the mandate.

In his first remarks, Ray (last name unknown) highlighted Rhode Island’s firearm training system where citizens can buy their firearm after they pass their firearms test and carry it to the range.

In his first comment, Mike Follo spoke about the lack of range resources within the Commonwealth. Mr. Follo highlighted issues such as cost, travel, ammunition, and targets as examples of unclear requirements for the proposed mandate.

In his second statement, John U. suggested that the intent behind live fire training must not be that a citizen is a good shooter, but that they are a safe shooter.

Dan Simmler seconded these comments arguing the focus of any firearms mandate should be safety not requiring live fire training.

Instructor and sportsman club president Paul Johnson criticized the lack of communication by the legislature towards firearms instructors in creating these “regulations.” He shared that no one contacted his range about the new mandate.

Firearms instructor John Lawer questioned what the parameters are for live fire training within the mandate. Mr. Lawer claimed the mandate was unclear about what the training entails. He also shared potential issues with range regulations as his range only allows one guest each visit.

Domestic violence advocate Valentina Provida argued that victims should not be burdened with mandates when they are trying to obtain a firearm to protect themselves.

Lastly, Tom Stevens highlighted the case *Commonwealth v. Donnell* (SJC 2025) as a potential barrier to this mandate.

Attorney Melander thanked participants and ended the public hearing.