

# Senate approves ban on local gun control

By Tim Richard  
staff writer

Local gun control ordinances would be illegal under a Senate-passed bill aimed at giving Michigan a uniform law, Senate Bill 813, which goes now to the House, was a defeat for lawmakers from Detroit, Ann Arbor and Flint.

"This is fertile ground for abuse of power," said the sponsor, Sen. Chris Dingell, D-Trenton, who had the support of the sheriffs' association, State Police, sportsmen's clubs and

the National Rifle Association. Senators gave the bill 28-5 approval. Among area senators, only Jack Faxon, D-Farmington Hills, voted no.

Faxon was joined by William Faust, D-Westland, in vainly trying to amend the bill to give cities some local controls.

DINGELL, A first-term lawmaker and son of the veteran congressman, carried the three-hour debate alone. He told stories about abuses of local control:

• Detroit used to have a waiting

period up to six months for a handgun permit and made an assistant county prosecutor wait the full six months.

• Detroit advertises it has a training school for gun permit applicants, but a Dingell staffer calling the number was able only to reach an annoyed water department clerk. (A senator from Detroit said the program started in February.)

• A sheriff in a southern state told him: "Don't worry about having a local permit around here. We've never heard of a white person having a problem." Added Dingell: "That was in the mid-'70s."

Dingell argued that the amendments allowing local units to have stiffer handgun rules than state law were unnecessary because they wouldn't result in longer prison terms for the guilty.

"Michigan has a practice of concurrent sentencing. A person wouldn't get a longer sentence (for being convicted under a local ordinance). He or she probably wouldn't even be charged for the second offense," he said.

FAXON HEAPED ridicule on proponents as he argued for local-control amendments.

"We're not taking away anybody's guns. You can't measure what the (local) waiting period does because the people are still alive..."

"It's like there's some fundamental right to buy a gun and fiddle around with it and see what happens..."

Supporting the failed amendment of Sen. Lana Pollack, D-Ann Arbor to allow cities to prohibit guns in many institutions, Faxon said, "It's like we're sending a message: This is a free gun state. You can go into nursery schools, private schools, hospitals. Give them their guns! Give them an Uz!"

Replied Dingell: "The damage of my colleagues has hit a new low."

DINGELL SAID local ordinances were unnecessary to require training because the injury rate "has been coming down drastically through private action — not through government."

He praised sportsmen's clubs for hunter safety and gun safety programs.

Sen. Virgil Smith, D-Detroit, said his city operates an eight-hour course at the Detroit Police Academy building. Smith gave a telephone number.

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