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State Sen. Jefferson Van Drew (D-Dennis)

## Van Drew votes for 5 of 7 gun bills

*Democratic nominee largely reprises old voting record*

By [Nikita Biryukov](#), June 07 2018 8:54 pm

State Senator Jeff Van Drew, the Democratic nominee in the second congressional district, voted in favor of five of seven gun-control measures put before the upper chamber on Thursday.

The right-of-center Democrat's primary opponents targeted his record on the issue before Tuesday's election, focusing on Van Drew's 100% rating from the National Rifle Association and his past breaks from the party line on gun-control legislation.

But on Thursday, Van Drew appeared to moderate his stance on the issue, which saw him vote against a spate of gun-control measures introduced by fellow Democrats in 2013 following the Sandy Hook school shooting.

The measures Van Drew voted in favor of include ones allowing the seizure of firearms from people deemed by a healthcare professional to pose a threat to themselves or others, adopting the federal definition of armor-piercing ammunition, illegalizing the purchase of untraceable ghost guns, seizure of firearms through “extreme risk protection” orders and background checks for private gun sales.

But he largely kept to his voting record on measures that had appeared before the Senate during former Gov. Chris Christie’s term, voting against bills that would make it more difficult to obtain a handgun carry permit and would reduce the maximum capacity of ammunition magazines from 15 to 10 rounds.

“It’s not an issue where you’re saying to somebody, ‘oh, they can have 30 and 40 and 50 and 60.’ Some of these assault weapons are a different story – huge number of rounds that they carry,” Van Dew said. “That’s a whole different story, and I have a whole different opinion on that, and I wouldn’t vote for that. But in this case, I think it wasn’t necessary and I don’t think it will achieve a desired goal.”

All seven of the bills, whose votes were delayed until after Tuesday’s primary, received majority support in the Senate. All but A1217, which deals with extreme risk protection orders, are headed to the governor’s desk. A1217 will need to pass a vote in the assembly before heading there as well.

Van Drew’s stance on guns could alienate more liberal Democrats in the second congressional district, ones who would be glad to see the measures he voted against today and in the past codified into law, but the senator didn’t seem to be concerned about that prospect.

That lack of concern came, in part, from what he called his “common sense” stance on gun control, particularly as it related to the issue of background checks. Van Drew went as far as to say he would sponsor national background check legislation if he wins in November.

“What I would stand for, vote for, and be proud to sponsor is that at every gun show, every gun exchange, every gun shop – anywhere — everybody who owns a gun must have a thorough background check,” Van Drew said. “That’s not true now, and that’s wrong, and that should change

More realistically, liberal Democrats in the district might cast ballots for the senator regardless of his stance on guns to prevent Republican nominee Seth Grossman, who has made his run largely on supporting President Donald Trump and his agenda, from taking retiring Rep. Frank LoBiondo’s seat.

Still, Van Drew’s toeing a fine line.

Gun control has become something of a defining issue to some Republicans, and voting for any gun control measure, regardless of how popular it is – 97% of voters nationally supported universal background checks for gun purchases in a February Quinnipiac poll – could draw away votes and pull outside money into the race.

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## One thought on “Van Drew votes for 5 of 7 gun bills”

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**Joseph F DeRose**

July 2, 2018 at 5:52 pm

I have always supported Jeff, and now I don't think I can vote for him again. I have to agree the two he voted no on were the best of the new stupid laws to reject, but any moron knows that only law abiding citizens get screwed with ne laws. Criminal don't seem to care about laws.