



Tennessee State Senator Rosalind Kurita grew up target shooting a pellet gun with her Dad and sisters in the backyard. As a result, Kurita says she never thought of shooting as something girls didn't do. Today, she is an avid skeet shooter and an up and coming leader in Tennessee politics.

Rosalind Kurita was first elected to the Tennessee State Senate in 1996 and won re-election convincingly in 2000. A resident of Clarksville, Tennessee, Kurita represents Cheatham, Houston, and Montgomery counties in the General Assembly. In the Senate, Kurita serves on the powerful General Welfare, Health, and Human Resources Committee. The committee oversees all health issues in the state and the position allows her to be extensively involved in health legislation. As the Senate's only Registered Nurse, Kurita is known as an advocate for sound public health policy.

So what does a Senator do to escape the high stress world of politics and public policy? In the case of Senator Kurita, she shoots. For the last two years, Kurita has been an active skeet shooter and has participated in several shooting competitions in Tennessee. When she

decided to get serious about skeet shooting, she consulted one of her constituents, George Wade. Wade taught Kurita the basics of skeet shooting on his Cheatham County farm.

“George Wade was such a patient teacher,” Kurita said. “He helped me really appreciate the sport of skeet shooting. If I’ve learned one thing about the sport, it’s that it requires your total concentration.”

In fact, Kurita says that it is precisely the emphasis on concentration that attracted her to shooting skeet.

“After a long day of committee meetings and dealing with legislative issues, I find it therapeutic to go out and shoot,” Kurita said. “I love being outdoors and I love the fun, competitive environment of shooting. It’s a sport that I can say is ‘my sport’ and that I can do pretty much whenever I want.”

One of the other benefits of skeet shooting for Kurita has been the opportunity to meet new people who are also shooters.

“Shooting has given me a chance to meet a number of people who love the outdoors like I do,” Kurita said. “As I’ve become more involved in shooting over the past two years, I’ve met some wonderful and interesting people.”

Senator Kurita credits her passion for shooting for helping her develop an idea for at least one piece of legislation. In the 2003 legislative session, she sponsored a bill that would give a tax break to anyone buying a gun safe. The bill would have exempted gun safe purchases from the state sales tax. Although the legislation stalled in committee during the 2003 session, Kurita plans to bring it up for consideration again in 2004.

“We need to encourage gun safety,” Kurita said. “It’s an important public health issue. But too often, legislators think the only way to promote gun safety is by passing laws that restrict the rights of responsible gun owners. My bill goes in the opposite direction, giving gun owners a sales tax break when they are willing to purchase a safe way to store guns. I see this as a low cost way to promote responsible gun storage that can help protect children from accidental access to guns.”

In addition to the gun safe sales tax exemption, Kurita is sponsoring legislation for the 2004 session that would help protect sporting gun ranges.

“Tennessee currently has a gun range protection statute, but it does not specifically require that notice of a gun range be put in writing on the plat and available for potential

home buyers to see,” Kurita noted. “What’s happening is gun ranges are facing problems because homeowners were not adequately notified before buying a home. We need to protect gun ranges in the same way we protect family farms.

“This law will protect our sport shooters,” Kurita said. “People have a right to shoot for sport and they have a right to expect that existing ranges will be protected. Sport shooting is a fun and safe activity, and we should do what we can to protect these ranges.”

The legislation is also designed to protect home buyers.

“When someone goes to buy their dream home, they have a right to know that a gun range is nearby,” Kurita added. “The change I’m proposing is intended to make home buyers fully aware of their surroundings before they buy.”

Kurita says it is important for gun owners and sport shooters to get involved in politics.

“We need our leaders in government to understand that shooting sports are incredibly safe,” Kurita said. “These sports promote an appreciation for the outdoors as well as an exciting competitive environment. It’s important for the people making our laws to understand that.”

Senator Rosalind Kurita is one of those people making our laws. In fact, the national political publication *Roll Call* recently identified her as a “rising star” in Tennessee politics. If this prediction is on target, Kurita is likely to have an influence on legislation for years to come. And why shouldn’t she? Her impressive bio includes work as a Registered Nurse, small business owner, State Senator, and yes – a shooter.

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