



CONNECTICUT POLICE CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

342 North Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut 06117-2507

(860) 586-7506 Fax: (860) 586-7550 Web site: www.cpcanet.org

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee

March 16, 2007

Chiefs Anthony Salvatore & James Strillacci, Connecticut Police Chiefs Association

We appreciate the intent of **RB #7212, AA Prohibiting the Sale of Electronic Defense Weapons**, but we would recommend a different approach.

Police have varying opinions about allowing their use by persons outside law enforcement or the military. Electronic stun guns are designed as defensive instruments, but are subject to misuse. They can be used to commit crimes, and may even be used against police.

However, the law allows private citizens to buy, possess, and carry firearms, which are far more dangerous than electronic weapons. Guns can kill and maim, while stun guns rarely cause injury. Firearms projectiles can travel great distances, but stun guns are useless outside a few yards. Bullets can penetrate walls, but TASER darts can be defeated by a heavy coat. Firearms can hold multiple projectiles and can be reloaded easily, but common stun guns are single-shot and slower to reload.

If a child gets hold of a carelessly stored stun gun, or an angry man turns one on his spouse, the result may be serious, but it won't be as irreparable as if the weapon had been a pistol. A burglar may steal one, but he won't use it in a drive-by shooting.

Like firearms, stun guns should be regulated. Register them if you will, require a permit to carry, require training and background checks. But a ban is not necessary. It would deprive fearful citizens of an effective, non-lethal tool for self-defense.

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