NEW HAVEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLICE SERVICE

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Francisco Ortiz, Jr.
Chief of Police

John DeStefano Jr
Mayor

Testimony of the City of New Haven to the Judiciary Committee

Honorable Committee Members, thank you for allowing me to address you. My name is Captain Peter Reichard; I am head of the Investigative Services Division of the New Haven Police Department. I respectfully testify on behalf of the City of New Haven Police Department and Mayor John DeStefano, Jr. in support of SB 607, An Act Concerning The Identification Of Certain Firearms And The Criminal Possession Of Firearms.

SB 607 requires microstamping of the firing pins in all firearms that are sold and purchased within the State of Connecticut. Microstamping technology uses lasers to make microscopic engravings on the firing pin of a gun, which leave an identifying mark on any spent casings discharged from that gun. The ability to identify and link spent casings to a specific firearm would assist law enforcement officials with the tracking of that weapon if it is lost, stolen or used in the commission of a crime.

During the calendar year 2007 the City of New Haven Police Department investigated 162 assaults and 13 homicides committed by use of a firearm. During this same calendar year our agency responded to 940 reports of gunfire within the city limits. These reports resulted in 577 cases where ballistic evidence was seized by officers on the street. All of these incidents in addition to the assault shootings and homicides, places a great burden on the officers of the New Haven Police Department.

Presently, when evidence from the discharge of a firearm is collected, it sent to the Connecticut State Police Forensic Laboratory in Meriden, CT for processing by an expert firearm examiner. This Laboratory is the only facility in the state that processes evidence for police departments and does so for the entire state. The backlog of evidence from firearms cases is evident by the amount and nature of incidents in the City of New Haven alone, compiled with the evidence sent in by the remainder of the police agencies in the state.

The Microstamping of firearms will greatly reduce this backlog of cases at the laboratory and allow each police agency in the state to examine ballistic evidence collected at crime scenes. The ability to identify which crime scenes are linked together based on the identifiers from the microstamping process will greatly enhance the police agencies throughout the state's ability to reduce crimes that involve firearms.

Tracking of firearms through any means is a difficult job for any police agency in the nation. With the use of current technology the tracking process has become easier in the past decade. Now we are faced with an even newer form of technology that can greatly enhance the tracking of firearms. A simple database of information related to microstamped firearms can only be an asset to our police.

Although we understand that microstamping of firearms is not a cure-all for firearms related crimes; if it has the ability to reduce the number of firearms used in crimes by a modest percentage it would be of a great assistance to law enforcement officers and make our communities safe places to reside in.

We urge the passage of this legislation as it is a step in the right direction to reduce gun crimes across the state of Connecticut and the nation.