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IN OPPOSITION to SB 607 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE IDENTIFICATION OF CERTAIN FIREARMS AND THE CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF FIREARMS.

by Robert T. Crook, Director

Mandating the use of this unreliable technology is predicated on the faulty assumption that most criminals obtain the firearms they use to commit crime from federally licensed firearm retailers. A 1997 survey of prison inmates shows criminals rarely obtain firearms from retail dealers. They obtain firearms primarily – about 80% – from the illegal black market and from friends and family.

Experts at the University of California, Davis, recently finished a study of this technology which was requested and funded by the California State Legislature. The conclusions about the technology are straightforward and direct. The researchers found this patented technology "flawed" and concluded that "At the current time it is not recommended that a mandate for implementation of this technology in all semiautomatic handguns in the state of California be made. Further testing, analysis and evaluation is required." Importantly, the study established "that the micro-characters could easily be intentionally destroyed" in less than 30 seconds using common household tools and objects readily available to the general public without effecting the ability of the firearm to function or criminals could simply switch the engraved firing pin for readily available unmarked spare parts, thereby circumventing the technology. Criminals will do this for the same reason they now deface the serial number on firearms (which reportedly has significantly increased in recent years), to avoid detection by law enforcement.

Firing pins are typically purchased in bulk from suppliers and not manufactured by firearm makers. Under this bill, the cost of firing pins would go from pennies to several dollars adding significantly to the price of firearms. Under federal law, the frame or receiver of the firearm is the part that must be serialized. Under this bill, it would be necessary to serialize multiple parts (each manufactured at different times and locations) and coordinate the assembly to ensure that the parts all had the same serial number. How would an assembler know whether a component part had the correct serial number for the firearm they were then assembling since the number would be microscopic in size? Sounds like a good issue for outsourcing.

The price of firearms for all consumers, including municipalities and the State purchasing firearms for law enforcement agencies, would dramatically increase. The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturers' Institute (SAAMI) estimates a price increase of approximately \$50 to \$100 per firearm. Firearms for the commercial, law enforcement and military markets are all manufactured at the same time on the same plant and equipment manufacturing processes. Companies do not have "law enforcement only" and certainly do not have "California or CT only" production lines. The cost would be spread across all products in all markets necessarily resulting in significantly higher prices for all products. We are unaware of any study that attempts to compare the costs to taxpayers, consumers and industry, of requiring this technology relative to other proven and effective crime reduction strategies.

This bill will create an illegal black market for "non-laser engraved" firearms and further increase illegal, interstate firearm trafficking. Consider also that there are tens of millions of firearms in circulation that have not been, and cannot now be, micro-laser engraved.

We strongly urge rejection. The California study found this patented technology "flawed" yet their Legislature passed it. CT should not do the same.