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## MEMORANDUM OF OPPOSITION

**TO: Honorable Members of the Connecticut Judiciary Committee**  
**FR: Rebecca J. Williams, NRA-ILA Connecticut State Liaison**  
**RE: Raised Bill No. 607**  
**DATE: March 13, 2008**

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The National Rifle Association would like to communicate our position of opposition on Raised Bill No. 607, currently pending consideration in the Judiciary Committee.

Raised Bill No. 607 would require identifying marks to be etched into the firing pin and breech face of a firearm. This so-called "micro-stamping" technology is unproven, can easily be defeated, has no public safety value, and due to the high cost per firearm, can do great damage to Connecticut's manufacturers and the firearms market itself. It also raises problems for law enforcement. Raised Bill No. 607 would also make it a crime to alter the firearm in such a way that affects any identifying marks, making it illegal to repair a firearm or replace a firing pin due to breakage or normal wear and tear.

**Micro-stamping has repeatedly failed in tests.** In 2006, a study by forensic experts and researchers at the University of California (Davis) concluded, "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."<sup>2</sup> Results of the study were consistent with earlier peer-reviewed tests published by the Association of Firearms and Toolmarks Examiners.<sup>3</sup> Firearms examiner George Krivosta, of the Suffolk County, N.Y., crime lab, found that the "vast majority" of micro-stamped characters in the alphanumeric serial number couldn't be read on "any of the expended cartridge cases generated and examined."

**Micro-stampings are easily removed.** In the tests noted above, firing pins were removed in minutes, and serial numbers were obliterated in less than a minute, with household tools.

**Most gun crimes cannot be solved by micro-stamping, or do not require micro-stamping to be solved.** Most gun crimes do not involve shots being fired, thus there are no cartridge cases left at crime scenes for police to recover. Also, a large percentage of crimes involving guns, involve guns that don't eject fired cartridge cases. Notwithstanding TV shows that portray crime-solving as impossible without high-technology, most crimes can be solved by traditional means. For example, of murders in which the victim-offender relationship is known, 77% involve family members, friends and other acquaintances. Only 23% involve strangers.<sup>4</sup>

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**Most criminals who use guns, get them through unregulated channels.** According to the BATFE, 88% of crime guns are acquired through unregulated channels, and the median time between a crime gun's acquisition and its use in crime is 6.6 years.<sup>5</sup> According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, most criminals get guns via theft or the black market.<sup>6</sup> **Micro-stamping may increase gun thefts, home invasions and other burglaries, and expand the black market in guns.** Criminals will be further encouraged to get guns illegally; if they know that guns purchased legally will link them to a computerized database.

**Most guns do not automatically eject fired cartridge cases.** Revolvers can fire five or more rounds without any fired cases being ejected. Pump-action, bolt-action, lever-action and other types of guns eject fired cases only if the user manually operates the gun's unloading mechanism. If a fired case is not ejected at a crime scene, it cannot be recovered for examination.

**Only a small percentage of guns will be micro-stamped.** There are about 250 million guns in the U.S. already.<sup>7</sup> New guns sold annually account for only 2% of that total, new semi-automatic pistols less than 0.5%,<sup>8</sup> and guns to which this proposal would apply will account for a tiny fraction, at most.

**Most violent crimes are committed without guns.** According to the FBI, ¾ of violent crimes, including 1/3 of murders and 3/5 of robberies, are committed without guns.<sup>9</sup>

**Micro-stamping wastes money,** including that which is better spent on traditional crime-fighting and crime-solving efforts. It will require a costly computerized database to track micro-stamped handguns, costs that will be passed along to all consumers, including law enforcement agencies. It will require a redesign of the handgun manufacturing process, and could require payment of licensing fees to the sole-source micro-stamping patent holder.

**Problems for law enforcement.** Departments will have to spend money destroying all casings fired in training, to prevent casings from being reused at crime scenes. Criminals can obtain fired casings from practice ranges, and use them to "seed" crime scenes, to confuse investigators.

It is for the above stated reasons that we oppose Raised Bill No. 607. As always, I am available at (703) 517-8102 should you wish to discuss the NRA position on this proposal.

1. Gun control supporters have also advocated empowering the Consumer Products Safety Commission or BATFE to dictate firearm manufacturing standards that no manufacturer could achieve, advocated prohibiting the manufacture of guns that do not possess gadgetry intended to identify whether the person holding the gun is its owner, and try to bankrupt gun manufacturers by suing them for damages caused by criminals who misuse guns.

2. David Howitt, et al., What Laser Machining Technology Adds to Firearm Forensics: How Viable are Micro-Marked Firing Pins as Evidence?, 2007.

3. George G. Krivosta, "NanoTag™ Markings From Another Perspective," 38 *AFTE Journal* 41, 2006.

4. FBI, [www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/expanded\\_information/data/shrtable\\_09.html](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/expanded_information/data/shrtable_09.html).

5. BATFE, *Crime Gun Trace Reports 2000, National Report*, [www.atf.gov/firearms/vcgii/2000/highlights.pdf](http://www.atf.gov/firearms/vcgii/2000/highlights.pdf).

6. Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Firearm Use by Offenders," [www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/fuo.pdf](http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/fuo.pdf).

7. National Research Council, *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review*, National Academies Press, 2005.

8. BATF, "Firearms Commerce in the United States 2001/2002," [www.atf.gov/pub/index.htm](http://www.atf.gov/pub/index.htm) - Firearms.

9. FBI, [www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/violent\\_crime/index.html](http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2006/offenses/violent_crime/index.html).