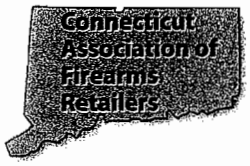

March 17, 2008

Joint Committee on Judiciary
Legislative Office Building
Room 2500
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Opposition to SB 603 An Act Concerning Ammunition Coding

Dear Members of the Committee:

I am writing on behalf of the Connecticut Association of Firearms Retailers (CTAFR) which is a non-profit trade association representing Connecticut firearms retailers. Our membership includes Connecticut-based federally licensed firearms retailers, most of which are small "mom-n-pop" businesses that are the backbone of the state's economy. We would like to express our opposition with raised bill SB 603 that would mandate ammunition coding (bullet serialization) within Connecticut. CTAFR is opposed to this legislation for several reasons.

Some of the real life variables not considered by the legislation is the fact that ammunition often changes hands, in some cases several times, before it is fired. There is no reliable way to track a single round of ammunition from the point of manufacture to the end user. Ammunition is frequently lawfully transferred in places other than retail locations such as estate sales, sportsmen's fund raising events, and even garage sales.

The popular hobby of reloading fired cases, which has become a major source of revenue for many retailers, has been in existence for the better part of a century. There are literally millions of cases reloaded every year by sportsmen, competition shooters, recreational shooters, and commercial businesses. Every reloader has casings from several different sources. Many are purchased from shooting ranges where a large number of cartridge cases are collected daily from ammunition that has been discharged by people engaged in target shooting. Thus, if the proposed legislation were to become law, every box of reloaded ammunition would have cartridge cases with several different serial numbers, none of which would be registered to the person currently possessing them. Reloaded ammunition used in the commission of a crime would be impossible to trace to the person who used it thus in turn wasting law enforcement's time and resources.

When subjected to the closer scrutiny this proposal deserves, it is completely unrealistic to believe that serialization can be accomplished on the various types of equipment being used by manufacturers. Since our nation's armed forces and law enforcement agencies depend so heavily on manufacturers that produce ammunition for military, law enforcement, and civilian markets, and since this proposal clearly threatens the viability of those firms, I urge you to strongly oppose ammunition serialization on the grounds that it would harm our national and homeland security.

If enacted, the proposed legislation would quickly become just another law that would only affect lawful citizens and the federally licensed retailers that they conduct business with. These law-abiding citizens are not part of the firearms related crime problem. The entire scope of legislation needs to be considered before enacted.

Sincerely,

David B. Lyman