

Testimony of Marshall K. Robinson 3-17-08 regarding S.B. No. 603 and S.B. 607

603

Sec. 1 the way it is written states that only the bullet needs the “identifier” etched onto the base of the bullet.

Some manufacturers use a letter stamp for quality control purposes on the base of their lead bullets in 22 caliber cartridges. There is no room for additional information unless you want them to discontinue their quality control program. The cost to implement the procedures to satisfy your wishes regarding the stamping or other means of putting information on the base of any bullet is prohibitive.

The proposed law deals with handgun and “assault weapon” ammunition. Since any item capable of inflicting injury is technically an assault weapon, you need to define, exactly, what constitutes an assault weapon.

Speaking about cartridges for handguns and “assault weapons” are you aware of the vast amount of cartridges that are handloaded by shooters? Shooters will save their cartridge cases and buy new primers, bullets, and gunpowder and reload the cartridges. Will you be asking every manufacturer of bullets in America and Europe to imprint identifying information on the bullets that are sold to reloaders in America?

What about those handloaders who cast their own lead bullets – in all calibers? How is the handloader in his cellar reloading operation to be expected to microengrave or etch identifying information on the bullets that he makes for his own shooting pleasure?

Sec. 3

Does this section cover handloaders?

Do you call a handloader a manufacturer?

Section 3(b)(2), seven years, is contradicted by Section 3 (F) (3), three years

Sec. 4

(b) The Commissioner of Public Safety has the sole authority to impose fines up to \$10,000. How can such power be legislated to one department head in this state?

Connecticut has many military organizations who have and use firearms both handguns, machine guns, and rifles, some of which you like to call “assault weapons”. Many of them are the same weapons that are available to private citizens. Are you going to impose this law on the military ammunition?

How does your proposed law deal with foreign imported ammunition, which is used in large quantities by the sportsmen in America.

How does your proposed law deal with United States Military ammunition that is sold through surplus sales?

Finally, as a Forensic Scientist, I can tell you that it is very seldom that we get a pristine bullet from an autopsy or crime scene that would still have the information on it that you are demanding. Many bullets, when fired, have their bases heavily blasted by the unburned and partially burned powder granules, to such an extent that we can very often tell what kind of powder was loaded in the cartridge. If you had done your homework and visited a Forensic Laboratory you would have been given the opportunity to talk to those of us who actually examined fired bullets and cartridge cases and you would have been able to view, firsthand, what a bullet from a body or crime scene looks like. If you did visit a lab or otherwise consult with a Firearms examiner and did not see this type of evidence or weren't told about the damage to evidence bullets then you have been horribly misled.

S.B. 607

Any identifying micro etched or engraved markings that may be put on the tip of a firing pin will be subject to significant wear. The markings are delicate and microscopic in nature and will not last. They are also extremely easy to remove or change to the extent that it could be done with your wife's nailboard. There is another phenomenon that you are not aware of and it is called "firing pin drag". Firing pin drag very often occurs in automatic and semi-automatic firearms when the breech begins to open and the firing pin is still forward. When the breech opens the barrel will tilt downward. When this happens and the firing pin is still forward, it will drag and dig a furrow from the firing pin impression toward the outer diameter of the primer, thus obliterating any data that may have been present on the tip of the firing pin. I am guessing that Mr. Lizzotte showed you only best case scenarios and you bought it.

If you want to say that the removal of any of these markings will be illegal, I say to you that that will make no difference to the persons who are using firearms for illegal purposes. It is already illegal to obliterate markings on firearms and I see it all the time. Murder and assault are illegal but we see it every day.

Perhaps one of the most insidious parts of S.B. 607 is your attempting to change the existing law from pistols or revolver to all firearms. These laws will do nothing to prevent crimes with guns but will only harass honest gun owners and require the registration of guns not normally used in crimes – rifles and shotguns. It's the same as outlawing what you like to call "assault weapons" which are used in less than 1 % of the crimes in Connecticut and elsewhere.