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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. 603
DATE: March 13, 2008

The National Rifle Association would like to communicate our position of opposition on Raised Bill No. 603, currently pending consideration in the Judiciary Committee.

Raised Bill No. 603 would require all handgun ammunition manufactured or sold in Connecticut to be coded with an individual serial number, and entered into a statewide database at the time of sale. This proposal would cause enormous increases in the cost of ammunition, lead to the cessation of the sale of certain low-volume varieties of ammunition and the establishment of a database of ammunition consumers. However, this legislation is dangerous to gun owners not just because it would increase the cost of ammunition exponentially and reduce or eliminate its availability, but because it actually exposes gun owners to risk of criminal prosecution without them even knowing it. Despite the lack of specificity in this bill, either through amendment or later regulation, a means and location of the serial number must be proscribed. All manufacturing processes that we have been made aware of require the serial number imprint either on the inside of the shell casing, the base of the projectile or both. In any case, the serial number isn't visible to the consumer and therefore, there is no way for the consumer to be assured that the serial number imprinted on the box matches the serial number on the rounds inside. Even if the industry can or will produce this ammunition exclusively as required by the state of Connecticut, the legal consumer will be required to register his or her purchase of ammunition and then blindly trust that the number etched on the base of the bullet projectile is accurately represented on the box in which it is sold. Since the base of the bullet projectile is necessarily obscured by the cartridge case, it is impossible for the consumer to know if he has accurately "registered" his purchase. This legislation is expensive to the taxpayer, the consumer and the retailer while having absolutely no public safety benefit.

Under Raised Bill No. 603, people would be required to forfeit all personally-owned, non-encoded ammunition. After a certain date, it would be illegal to possess non-encoded ammunition. Gun owners possess hundreds of millions of rounds of ammunition for target shooting, hunting and personal protection. Consider that American manufacturers produce 8 billion rounds each year. Reloading (re-using cartridge cases multiple times) would be abolished.

Due to the vagueness of the Raised Bill No. 603, the regulatory process would have to dictate that private citizens either maintain records, if they transfer ammunition to anyone, including family

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members or friends, or would have to outright ban the transfer of ammunition between private citizens.

Passage of Raised Bill No. 603 would cause the cost of ammunition to soar for police and private citizens alike. The Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturing Institute estimates it would take three weeks to produce ammunition currently produced in a single day. For reason of cost, manufacturers would produce only ultra-expensive encoded ammunition, which police would have to buy, just like everyone else.

Raised Bill No. 603 would not deter criminals. In fact, a large percentage of criminals' ammunition is stolen. Will this then precipitate legislation to require the reporting of lost or stolen ammunition? Additionally, savvy criminals could easily beat the system by collecting ammunition cases from shooting ranges and reloading them with molten lead bullets made without serial numbers.

A federal requirement with intent similar to Raised Bill No. 603 was eliminated by Congress in the in the 1980s, because there was no law enforcement benefit. Federal law had required purchasers of handgun ammunition to sign a ledger, but Congress repealed that requirement in 1983 (.22 rimfire) and 1986 (center-fire handguns), because it burdened purchasers, vendors, and police, with no law enforcement benefit. This move by Congress was very clearly not motivated by partisan politics, as the repeal occurred during a Democratic-controlled U.S. House of Representatives.

It should also be noted that this bill would negatively impact hunters and sportsmen, as it would outlaw the private sale of rifles and shotguns between law-abiding citizens. This provision, like the others, would have no public safety benefit as criminals, including straw purchasers, would still have the ability to transfer long guns for illicit reasons.

It is for the above stated reasons that we oppose Raised Bill No. 603. As always, I am available at (703) 517-8102 should you wish to discuss the NRA position on this proposal.