



State of Connecticut
DIVISION OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE

Testimony on the Division of Criminal Justice

In Support of:

S.B. No. 603 (RAISED) An Act Concerning Ammunition Coding

S.B. No. 604 (RAISED) An Act Concerning Hate Crimes

**S.B. No. 607 (RAISED) – An Act Concerning the Identification of Certain
Firearms and the Criminal Possession of Firearms**

Joint Committee on Judiciary – March 17, 2008

The Division of Criminal Justice respectfully recommends the Committee's Joint Favorable Report for S.B. No. 603, An Act Concerning Ammunition Coding, S.B. No. 604, An Act Concerning Hate Crimes, and S.B. No. 607, An Act Concerning the Identification of Firearms and the Criminal Possession of Firearms.

We strongly support the embodied in S.B. No. 603 and S.B. No. 607 for the same reason: both of these bills allow for the utilization of modern technology to advance the pursuit of justice. These bills would greatly enhance the ability of law enforcement to identify firearms and ammunition used in the commission of violent crime. The inability of law enforcement investigators to identify ammunition has been a significant obstacle to solving many violent crimes, including homicides.

The Division of Criminal Justice also supports S.B. No. 604, An Act Concerning Hate Crimes, and would respectfully recommend the Committee's Joint Favorable Report. This bill clarifies our hate crimes statutes with regard to the display of nooses. The bill would make it a crime to display a noose with the intent to intimidate or harass, as is the case with other conduct already prohibited under the existing hate crimes statutes. At the same time, the bill would clarify that the display of a noose for legitimate reasons (i.e., in a Halloween display or theatrical production) with no intent to harass or intimidate is not a criminal act.

Simply put, the bill adds the display of a noose to those acts prohibited when it is promoted by hatred or is used to promote hatred, but it does not restrict the constitutionally protected right to expression in appropriate instances. Specificity and clarity are essential to good criminal law, and S.B. No. 604 makes such a clarification.

The Division of Criminal Justice thanks the Committee for this opportunity to present our input and recommendations. We would be happy to provide any additional information or to answer any questions the Committee might have.