

Raised Bills 603 (Ammunition Coding) & 607 (Identification of Certain Firearms)

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I am a competitive shooter and a retired CT registered engineer with thirty seven years experience in Mechanical Design and Computing.

Raised Bills 603 and 607 both propose to use serialization technology to increase public safety by ammunition coding and imprinting schemes. Although shooters are concerned and support public safety, they do not support implementing these burdensome and costly restrictions when public safety improvement is negligible.

The proposed serialization Bills fail in several ways:

1. **There is no way to guarantee that collected data remains accurate or useful.** The purchaser of ammunition may not be the ultimate user. Ammunition has a long shelf life when properly stored and may change hands many times before it is used. In the case of firearms, there is no way to prevent serialization from being altered or removed. Features can be filed away or parts can be substituted. The benefit of serialization is destroyed when the link to the purchaser or the serial number is broken.
2. **Criminals will have little trouble obtaining guns and ammunition that subvert serialization.** Sources from out of state, straw buyers, and the black market will easily defeat the registration database. Moreover, criminals will continue to steal guns and ammunition from law-abiding citizens and use them to commit crimes. Only the law abiding will bear the brunt of the severe burden imposed by these bills.
3. **This has been tried before and failed.** The gun control act of 1968 required purchasers of ammunition to provide ID and sign a ledger in order to track who bought it. It was repealed in the Firearms Owner's Protection Act of 1986 as being unworkable, unusable, and of no benefit to law enforcement. The similarities to the proposed bills are striking.
4. **Enforcing the disposal of noncoded ammunition is nearly impossible.** These Bills would effectively eliminate the hand loading of ammunition, a very popular procedure in the shooting community. How will the State ever be able to verify whether all ammunition is serialized without a massive task force? It is hard to believe that CT shooters will voluntarily dispose of their existing hand loaded ammunition.
5. **The serialization technologies are unproven and costly.** It remains to be proven if impressions on lead bullets and brass cases can be produced consistently at acceptable cost in production or the field. It is more questionable whether such markings remain legible in the field. For example, cases can be reloaded many times, which would obliterate markings. The cost of implementing serialization is unknown, but likely would increase the cost of ammunition and handguns substantially. Some estimates suggest 10 to 20 times current cost is to be expected.

I urge the committee to reject these Raised Bills and direct attention and funding to enforcement of existing laws.