



CT Against Gun Violence

P.O. Box 523 Southport, CT 06890
tel: 203-268-3050 fax: 203-268-2940
www.cagv.org

Testimony to the Judiciary Committee
Lisa Labella and Ron Pinciario, Co-Executive Directors

March 17, 2008

In SUPPORT Of SB 607 - An Act Concerning The Identification Of Certain Firearms And The Criminal Possession Of Firearms.

Good afternoon. I am Lisa Labella, this is Ron Pinciario, and we are Co-Executive Directors of CT Against Gun Violence.

We are speaking to you today in support of SB 607 requiring the microstamping of firearms because we believe that microstamping is an important tool that will help law enforcement solve gun crime.

In 2007, 26 Hartford residents were murdered by guns. By December 31, only 6 arrests had been made in those cases, leaving 77 percent unsolved. The numbers are similar for our other large cities: In Bridgeport, 69 percent of the gun homicides had not resulted in an arrest by the end of the year. And in New Haven, no arrests had been made in 85 percent of homicides and non-fatal shootings.

Clearly something must be done to help law enforcement get information that will lead to an arrest.

In many cases, the only evidence at the crime scene is a spent cartridge case. But today, that cartridge can only be tied to the specific gun that shot it if the gun itself is found. When microstamping is incorporated into semiautomatic pistols, it will allow police to positively link used cartridge cases recovered at crime scenes to the exact guns that fired them, without having the gun in their possession.

In addition, the technology could be a deterrent to the illegal gun trafficking that allows children and criminals such easy access to guns. All guns start with a legal sale from a licensed dealer. Yet in Connecticut, more than 85 percent of gun crimes are committed by people who cannot legally purchase guns. So where do they get the gun?

Tracing data from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives indicates that, when a source state could be identified, two-thirds (67%) of the firearms traced and recovered in Connecticut were first purchased legally right in the state¹. Often this is through a straw purchase, when a person who is legally qualified to buy guns purchases them from a dealer and then sell them to prohibited users. Microstamping will help deter this chain of trafficking, because straw purchasers will be less likely to act in this capacity if they believe a gun can quickly and easily be traced back to them after being used in a crime.



We recognize that microstamping may not be perfect. But the state of California believed that the technology was another tool to help law enforcement in its difficult task of solving crimes with very little evidence. In his signing message to the California State Assembly, Governor Schwarzenegger wrote, "While I appreciate and understand that this technology is not without limitations, I am signing this bill to provide law enforcement with an additional tool for solving crimes committed with semi-automatic handguns in California."²

And Connecticut law enforcement is supporting this technology. Although they are not here in person, the Connecticut Chiefs of Police have submitted testimony supporting microstamping, as have police departments from New Haven and Hartford.

Microstamping technology is already required for new semiautomatic pistols sold in California after January 1, 2010. Manufacturers already have to incorporate the technology into their manufacturing process to sell guns into that huge market. It's only makes sense that CT, a state that has always been forward thinking about gun violence prevention, would be the next state to pass this legislation.

We also support the language in the bill equalizing the criminal possession of long guns with those of handguns. With over 30 percent of gun crime committed by long guns, we need to recognize that those weapons cause the same mayhem and tragedy as handguns³ (see attached list of some incidents with long guns in 2008).

We urge the Judiciary Committee to support SB 607. None of the provisions in this bill will interfere with the rights of law-abiding citizens to own as many guns as they choose. But they will provide law enforcement with important and necessary tools to help identify and arrest those who use guns in ways that are so harmful to our communities.

¹ATF Connecticut, Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information, Data Source: Firearms Tracing System, 2006

²<http://gov.ca.gov/pdf/press/2007bills/AB%201471%20Signing%20Message.pdf>.

³ ATF Connecticut, Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Office of Strategic Intelligence and Information, Data Source: Firearms Tracing System, 2006



Rifles & shotguns ARE used in crimes

**Rifles and shotguns accounted for
38% of CT traced firearms in 2006.**

Some stories in 2008:

- ⊙ East Haven – East Haven Domino’s robbed twice over the weekend (New Haven Register, 1/8/08)
- ⊙ Hartford – Man robbed at gunpoint in Hartford (Courant, 1/22/08)
- ⊙ Waterbury – Waterbury man charged with drug dealing, gun possession (Republican-American, 1/26/08)
- ⊙ Hartford – Masked robbers take \$100 from victims (Courant, 1/27/08)
- ⊙ Southington – Uncle, Nephew Arrested (Courant, 1/30/08)
- ⊙ Stamford – Man posted pot ad on Web, police say (The Advocate, 2/1/08)
- ⊙ Stonington – Stonington Police Identify Armed Men In Car Chase (The Day, 2/3/08)
- ⊙ South Windsor – Charged With Burglary (Courant, 2/5/08)
- ⊙ Plainville - Arrested After Fight (Courant, 2/7/08)
- ⊙ Montville - Man Charged After Fight With Montville Police Officer (The Day, 2/11/08)
- ⊙ Southbury - CL&P workers duck for cover as shots ring out in Southbury (Waterbury Republican-American - February 12, 2008)
- ⊙ Hartford - Police: Drugs, Weapons Seized (Courant, 2/22/08)
- ⊙ New Haven - Shootings Spur Renewed Cry For State Aid (Independent, 2/26/08)
- ⊙ Waterbury - Customer shot, highway closed, schools locked down amid Waterbury bank robbery (Journal-Inquirer, 2/27/08)
- ⊙ Litchfield - Warren Couple Facing Charges (County Times, 3/6/08)
- ⊙ Stamford - Robbery suspect arrested after fight (Advocate, 3/6/08)
- ⊙ Watertown - Watertown bank robbed at gunpoint; similar to Waterbury heist (Republican-American, 3/7/08)
- ⊙ New Haven - Would-be robber gets nothing in attempted city bank heist (Register, 3/8/08)
- ⊙ Bridgeport - Stop yields sawed-off shotgun, heroin (CT Post, 3/11/08)