

**Raised Bill № 603**  
and  
**Raised Bill № 607**

LCO No. 02583

LCO No. 02751

FROM: George Wm Sipila  
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SUBJ: (a) Raised Bill № 603 LCO № 02583 Coded Ammunition  
(b) Raised Bill № 607 LCO № 02751 ID of Certain Firearms and  
Criminal Possession of Firearms

1. I am opposed to Bill № 603 and 607.
2. I am a National Rifle Association (NRA) Training Counselor. In my capacity I can teach individuals the basics of firearms as an instructor and I can take qualified individuals and train and certify them as NRA instructors in any discipline for which I am certified. I am currently certified as an instructor for home firearm safety, muzzleloading rifle, muzzle-loading shotgun, pistol, personal protection, rifle, and shotgun; I am also a chief range safety officer. I am certified as an instructor for the CT Dept of Environmental Protection to teach the CT Education/Firearm Safety course and the bow hunting course. I have been active in scouting for over 25 years and have served as the shooting sports director at June Norcross Webster Scout Reservation (JNWSR) in Ashford CT since 2000; this camp is operated by the Connecticut Rivers Council Boys Scouts of America (CRC-BSA). I am a retired naval officer, having started in the naval reserve as a seaman recruit. I served approximately 35 months in the Vietnam combat zone. I am well versed in the use of firearms. Whenever I teach any course involving firearms, I place great emphasis on safety above all. Last year I wrote the syllabus for the BB-gun course for CRC-BSA. This syllabus was reviewed by Mr John Lamb, Dept of Public Health, Youth Camp Licensing, and Ms Valerie L. Bryan, RN, Supervising Nurse Consultant, Community Based Regulation Section, Dept of Public Health, State of Connecticut. The Dept of Public Health has determined that my course will be recognized to meet the training requirements to run a BB-gun range safely.
3. At the scout reservation, we use .22 cal LR ammunition, using rifles. The scouts are thus able to earn their rifle merit badges, provided they qualify in the practical portion of the merit badge; the practical portion includes knowledge, skill, and attitude, any one of which may disqualify a scout from earning the merit badge. On the shotgun trap range the scouts use 12 gauge shotguns in which they must hit 12 out of 25 clay pigeons twice in order to qualify for the shotgun merit badge. Again, the scout must show knowledge, skill, and attitude, any one of which may disqualify a scout from earning the merit badge. The .22 cal LR is the only type of cartridge ammunition authorized for use in earning the rifle merit badge. This coming summer the Venture Crews will be able to qualify for their venturing awards using pistols; these pistols, one a single action revolver and the other a semi-automatic pistol, also use .22 cal LR ammunition because of the ammunition availability. Venture Crews do have the option of using bigger caliber pistols/revolvers, i.e., 9mm, .38 cal, 40 cal, etc., but these will not be available at JNWSR. We currently expend approximately 60,000 rounds of .22 cal LR and 24,000 rounds of 12 gauge ammunition during the six weeks of scout camp. Before any scout even touches a firearm, they receive a 30-40 minute lecture on firearm and bow & arrow safety. The scouts taking the rifle and/or shotgun merit badges receive an additional three hours of safety lectures; venture crew members will receive a minimum of five hours of safety lectures before they touch a pistol/revolver. As you can tell, my camp director, Mr Patrick S. Boyd, and I believe in safety!
4. The .22 cal LR ammunition is by far the most popular type of ammunition available and constitutes the majority of the ammunition sales. CRC-BSA currently receives its ammunition through the Civilian Marksmanship Program (CMP) for the cost of shipping. If the scouting and the 4-H movements must now purchase coded ammunition, provided it is available from the manufacturers, the shooting programs will cease to exist due to the prohibitive cost. And because of the emphasis we place on safety, the safety aspects with regard to firearms will also disappear. The parents of many scouts send their boys to scout camp so they can learn the proper safety requirements for handling any firearm and then enjoy the fun of shooting paper targets safely. Target shooting is a fun sport. This is the way many youngsters first learn to shoot; many then go on to hunt small game with their fathers.
5. "Coded ammunition" means a bullet carrying a unique identifier etched onto the base of the bullet projectile by the manufacturer. The .22 cal LR projectile is a small lead projectile. When it strikes almost anything, it is deformed, in many cases beyond recognition. A firearm (rifle) caliber which has become very popular within the last five years is the .17 cal HMR (Hornady Magnum Rimfire), a necked down .22 WMR (Winchester Magnum Rimfire), and the .17 cal Mark 2, a necked down .22 cal LR. These projectiles are even smaller than the .22 cal LR. Manufacturers now have produced pistols that also fire the .17 cal HMR and the .17 Mark 2. In the old days (1880s) cowboys normally carried a revolver and a rifle which used the same ammunition. With the rising popularity of cowboy action shooting, there are many rifles that use the same ammunition as pistols. The 45-70 (45 cal, 70 grains of black powder originally, but now changed to smokeless powder) hunting rifle cartridge can now be used in a revolver and a derringer. However, an individual using a 45-70 revolver or derringer must be careful because of the recoil and possible physical damage to his wrist. Thompson Center Arms (TC Arms) of Rochester NH produces a single shot, break open pistol that will accept

interchangeable barrels for almost every cartridge (rifle and pistol) currently manufactured. As a result, the ammunition manufacturers will be forced to code everything they make.

6. When taking coded ammunition another step further, are we also going to code the shot in shotgun shells? TC Arms manufactures a pistol that shoots the 45 long colt cartridge and a 410 shotshell interchangeably. With the size of #9 shot, it will be nearly impossible to code every pellet in the shotshell; it will definitely be cost prohibitive. The next problem that arises involves black powder pistols and rifles. As a black powder rifle and pistol shooter, I melt the lead and pour it into a mold to make the round balls and maxi-balls. Technically I could code each ball by taking my metal stamps and stamping my initials or your initials on the projectile before loading the rifle or pistol for firing. We will also have to code the ammunition for air rifles and pistols. There are air rifles on the market that will propel the projectile (.177 cal and .22 cal projectiles) with a velocity of 1600 FPS (feet per second). This compares to 1500 FPS for the Remington Hyper Velocity .22 cal LR and 1255 FPS for the Remington High Velocity .22 cal LR cartridges. Basically, everything will have to be coded in order to meet the requirements of Bill № 603.

7. The first problem that arises is in the purchasing of the ammunition. How can the dealer guarantee to the buyer that the serial numbers on the box match the numbers imprinted on the base of the projectiles? Remember that the projectile is forced into the brass cartridge and then the cartridge is crimped tightly onto the projectile. This may raise some serious liability issues in the event of a mistake. The next problem that I foresee is the introduction of uncoded ammunition that is brought into the state from across state borders. But uncoded ammunition will not be illegal in the surrounding states. The enforcement of this law will be very difficult if not impossible. It will be impossible to stop that transfer. It is already difficult enough trying to stop the introduction of illegal drugs into the state even though we have the advantage in that the illegal drugs are also illegal elsewhere. It is also almost impossible to keep firearms out of the hands of felons and many individuals in street gangs; they don't have the prerequisite carry permits.

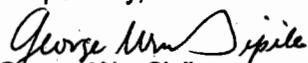
8. My main concern is the ramifications that this law will have on the scouting and 4-H movements in the state. In the scouting movement summer camp for many scouts is the first time that they are exposed to firearms. It is critical that we teach the safety aspects as well as proper respect for all firearms. Even if my safety lectures save one life because of the knowledge they learned in the classroom setting prior to touching that firearm, my time has been well spent. Please consider the ramifications that this bill may cause. This will also have a serious impact upon hunting in this state. Think back about 5-6 years when the bill was passed banning all open outdoor fires; until the scouting movement and camp site owners were able to overturn that law, we could not do outdoor cooking, teach wilderness survival skills, and a host of other skills which required an open fire. Bill № 603 will have a similar impact. This bill will also increase the cost to the tax payers who would indirectly absorb the increased cost of ammo for private security guards (i.e., around Millstone Nuclear Power Facility), the state police, local law enforcement personnel, and the National Guard. And will the guards on the Indian reservations be exempt?

9. Coding ammunition is an interesting idea. However, it is currently technologically unfeasible and cost prohibitive. With the current use of lead as the projectile, the unique identifier etched onto the base of the bullet projectile is easily distorted by the act of firing the cartridge. For example, the base of a .22 cal LR projectile expands slightly to engage the lands and grooves in the barrel as it makes its exit; this is true with all projectiles traveling through a rifled barrel. It is sincerely hoped that this bill is not just another means of restricting our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights as guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution.

10. With regard to Bill № 607, I agree that any convicted felon should not be authorized access to any type of firearm; but this law is already on the books. The fact that an individual is a convicted felon should be noted on the individual's driver's license. This would greatly assist retailers that sell sporting goods and firearms in identifying who is and is not eligible to purchase a firearm. Imprinting a semi-automatic pistol's "signature" on a cartridge in two or more places is interesting in theory, but not practical. At any rod and gun club, especially during competitions, a semi-automatic pistol will extract and fling the empty casing up to several yards away. I usually collect my brass for reloading; it is cheaper to enjoy the sport that way. But what happens if some empty casings are picked up by my nearest competitor by mistake (it is hard to read a microscopic array of characters under competitive conditions) or find their way into the grass or under some leaves to be picked up later by unknown individuals? There are many cartridges that can be fired by both a revolver and a semiautomatic pistol. This unknown individual could easily commit a crime with a revolver or pistol, collect his own brass, but leave behind the brass collected at the pistol range, implicating an innocent person. Another problem arises with the reloading of empty brass. Good brass can be reloaded several times, with the pistol superimposing one imprinted microstamp over another, essentially making the microscopic array of characters illegible, provided the imprint isn't completely destroyed in the tumbling process of reloading. We should enforce the existing laws that we have more rigidly. Remember, it is already a crime to possess a pistol/revolver outside your home or place of business without a permit. Let's aggressively punish the individuals that do use guns to commit crimes. Please remember that a murder by an individual using a firearm or driving a car ends in the same result; the victim is dead.

11. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Respectfully,

  
George Wm Sipila