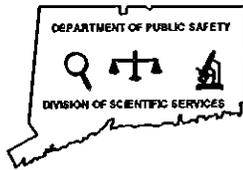




STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

John A. Danaher III
Commissioner

Lieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

March 16, 2009

Rep. Michael P. Lawlor, Co-Chairman
Sen. Andrew J. McDonald, Co-Chairman
Judiciary Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

SB 353 AN ACT CONCERNING THE MICROSTAMPING OF SEMIAUTOMATIC PISTOLS

The Department of Public Safety advises of fiscal impact and questions necessity of mandating a new technology for identification of spent cartridges.

This bill would require semiautomatic pistols sold, delivered or otherwise transferred at retail to be designed and equipped with a microscopic array of characters that identify their make, model and serial number on their internal parts and would imprint such identifiers on each cartridge case when the pistols are fired.

There is already a system in place that is extremely successful in identifying spent cartridge cases and linking them with guns used in previous crimes. Public Act 01-130, which is codified in Section 29-7h of the Connecticut General Statutes, required the Department of Public Safety's Division of Scientific Services to establish a firearms evidence databank. This firearms evidence data bank is a computer-based system that scans a test fire and stores an image of such test fire in a manner suitable for retrieval and comparison to other test fires and to other evidence in a case. The discharged ammunition consists of a cartridge case or a bullet or a fragment thereof, collected after a handgun is fired, and contains sufficient microscopic characteristics to compare to other discharged ammunition in order to determine the handgun from which the ammunition was fired.

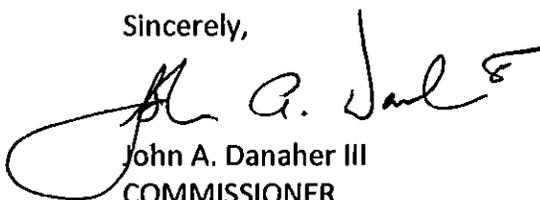
Test fire evidence submitted to the laboratory or collected from handguns submitted to the laboratory is entered into the databank. The firearms evidence databank is used by laboratory personnel to compare two or more cartridge cases, bullets or other projectiles submitted to the laboratory or produced at the laboratory from a handgun. This is often done upon the request of a police department as part of a criminal case investigation; microscopic examination of any resulting match can verify the gun used. Any image of a cartridge case, bullet or fragment thereof that is not matched by a search of the databank is stored in the databank for future searches.

The statute requires a police department to submit to the laboratory any handgun that comes into police custody as the result of a criminal investigation, as found property, or for destruction, prior to the return or the destruction of the handgun.

A test fire from each submitted handgun is collected and labeled with the handgun manufacturer, type of weapon, serial number, date of the test fire and name of the person collecting the test fire. Similarly, all handguns that are issued by police departments are test fired and the test fire is labeled and placed in a package with the handgun manufacturer, handgun type, serial number and the name of the person collecting the test fire. The laboratory shares the information in the firearms evidence databank with other law enforcement agencies, both within and outside the state, and also participates in a national firearms evidence databank program.

Considerable state resources have been invested in this technology, which is commonly used with other states and the federal government. Mandating a new technology would have a significant fiscal impact to the Department of Public Safety as additional personnel, new databases, and additional test, office and computer equipment would be necessary for proper enforcement.

Sincerely,



John A. Danaher III

COMMISSIONER

Department of Public Safety