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Joint Committee on Judiciary  
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building  
Hartford, CT 06106

**Testimony Opposing S.B. No. 353**  
**An Act Concerning The Microstamping Of Semiautomatic Pistols**

Good morning Senate Chairman McDonald, House Chairman Lawlor, Members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Edward De Cortin, a resident of Woodbury, and I appear before you to express opposition to Senate Bill 353, *An Act Concerning The Microstamping Of Semiautomatic Pistols*. You will hear testimony regarding microstamping's effectiveness from others; I will discuss how this legislation negatively impacts manufacturers and consumers of semi-automatic pistols. Twenty-two years as a manufacturer of machined parts serving Connecticut industry and a lifetime in the shooting sports qualify me to speak on these subjects.

The technology used to produce the markings proposed in this legislation has been proven in the electronic and medical industries. As applied in those fields, the markings serve merely to identify a component or assembly and are applied to surfaces which are easy to access. As applied to firearms, the markings are a functional component of a tool which embosses a mark on a cartridge case; these tool surfaces may be inaccessible. Of those surfaces that come in contact with a cartridge case, three are relevant to our discussion: the head of the firing pin, the breech face, and the chamber. The proposed legislation requires that two of the three be marked.

The firing pin is the most easily marked. I estimate that an experienced, skilled worker using a well designed holding fixture that is meticulously maintained could mark one firing pin per minute using one of the technologies suggested in Mr. Lizotte's patent

application<sup>1</sup>. Of the remaining surfaces, the breech face is easier to mark. Relative to the firing pin, a more sophisticated and therefore more costly fixture is required to precisely locate the markings. The operator's skill-set would be more developed, and more time would be required, I estimate two and one half minutes, to mark the breach face. Marking the chamber as proposed in Mr. Lizotte's patent under "Description Of The Preferred Embodiments" would add significant time to the chamber machining because the surface to be marked is inaccessible. Employing a "Marking Insert", a possible option, would add not more than two minutes to the machining time of a barrel and chamber unit, but it would increase the part count and add assembly time. The time to produce the additional components and assembly with the barrel and chamber unit would add as many as five minutes for a net increase of seven minutes for each barrel and chamber unit.

Minutes sound inconsequential. But in manufacturing, time is what you sell. What each minute costs varies by manufacturer, but when minutes are translated into dollars and added as direct manufacturing cost, the costs to the consumer rise exponentially. The argument that incorporating microstamping technology in any firearm would only add seven or eight dollars to the cost is specious. There are no economies of scale involved; the manufacturer is selling time. Firearm production involves much hand work performed by highly skilled craftsman. If a manufacturer were able to contain direct manufacturing costs to eight additional dollars per firearm for all marked parts over time, not just for firing pins in the first year as estimated by Fred Tulleners, director of the forensic science graduate program at University of California, Davis<sup>2</sup>, dealer wholesale cost would increase by \$128.00.

Firearms manufacture in Connecticut is one of very few durable goods industries left to fuel our local economy. For our Legislators to saddle the industry with increased costs to implement technology of dubious value is irresponsible. In the past, some people in the State felt as though they were being threatened when industry executives said they would leave Connecticut. That was not a threat, it was acting responsibly. Connecticut is a high cost state for a variety of reasons: energy cost, personal property taxes on capital

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equipment, real estate costs, and wages. Most manufacturers have links to industry partners or are owned by a conglomerate. It would be easy to transfer production to another facility in a lower-cost state. If these companies left Connecticut, it is estimated that in addition to 1,752 firearms industry employees identified by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, approximately 3,500 peripheral jobs would be lost. These are skilled workers who are paid significant wages. Should we boost a neighboring state's economy by exporting a highly skilled workforce and all the economic benefit available to the people of Connecticut?

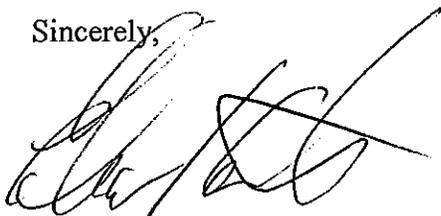
The bottom line of my thesis is this: passing any legislation mandating firearm microstamping is harmful to Connecticut's manufacturers and consumers. Manufacturers would face declining sales due to the artificially inflated cost of their product. Consumers would no longer be able to afford to purchase these firearms.

I know there are those among you anxious to take me to task because I've ignored the public safety aspect of the argument. To those people who would impeach me because of my focus on the economics of this proposal, I ask this question: why do we pursue this "solution" when there are other, cost effective, solutions that raise no evidentiary questions? One such solution is positive linking of spent cartridge casings to a person, rather than a firearm, by reading fingerprints made visible by a simple but fundamental new technology<sup>3</sup>.

I ask you: what are our objectives?

My sincere thanks to the Committee for allowing me to present my arguments here today. If you have any questions, I will make myself available by mail or by telephone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward S. De Cortin', written over a white background.

Edward S. De Cortin

Notes

1. United States Patent and Trademark Office. Utility Patent Number 7,204,419.  
16 March 2009 <<http://portal.uspto.gov>>.
2. University of California - Davis. "Firearms Microstamping Feasible But Variable, Study Finds." ScienceDaily 16 May 2008. 16 March 2009  
<<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/05/080514092333.htm>>.
3. University of Leicester. "New Fingerprint Breakthrough By Forensic Scientists."  
ScienceDaily 4 June 2008. 16 March 2009 <<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/06/080602103331.htm>>.