



Smith & Wesson

March 16, 2009

Chairman Andrew McDonald
Chairman Michael Lawlor
Joint Committee on Judiciary
Room 2500, legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: Connecticut SB 353 – (firearms micro-stamping) - Oppose

Dear Chairman McDonald/Lawlor and honored committee members,

Thank you for this opportunity to explain why Smith & Wesson strongly opposes Connecticut SB 353.

Smith & Wesson Corp. has been providing duty weapons and partnering with law enforcement and the military since 1852. We provide pistols to be used as duty weapons to many notable customers including Connecticut law enforcement agencies such as Hartford PD, Norwich PD, Stamford, PD, Waterbury PD, West Haven PD, Southbury PD and Canton PD just to name a few. Smith & Wesson also sells pistols and revolvers to Connecticut citizens for personal protection and sporting purposes through local distributors and retailers.

We oppose SB 353 because it will dramatically increase the cost of manufacturing firearms. We do not believe that SB353 will reduce crime or improve public safety. A study by U.C. Davis recommended against legislatively mandating this unproven, patented, sole-sourced technology, concluding that the technology was “flawed” and unreliable and because it can be so easily defeated in a matter of seconds using common household tools (see exhibit # 1-A thru 1-C for example). The operation of a semi-automatic pistol alone will cause the micro-stamping to wear over a period of time rendering the marking un-legible (see exhibit #2-A thru 2-F for explanation). We concur with the researchers at U.C. Davis who call for further study of this technology.

The passing of this bill would require a control number or markings to be micro-laser engraved on multiple surfaces or working parts on semi-automatic pistols. These markings would be transferred to each cartridge case when the pistol is fired in order to link a make, model and serial number of the product. With our manufacturing, firearms production is not just an assembly process. Most components are “hand-fit” to insure reliability and quality. The serial number is applied to the frame (per Federal Law) near the end of the assembly process, as the product is almost finished. If SB 353 was enacted, Smith & Wesson would have to fully manufacture and assemble the product, test them for function, then completely disassemble to outsource the micro-laser technology. Once the components were procured with micro-laser technology, we would then have to reassemble, possibly requiring additional hand fitting and then once again, test for function and reliability.



Smith & Wesson®

Not only will this dramatically increase the cost of the manufacturing process, it will create substantial incremental inventory and delays to our law enforcement partners. This increased cost would not only have a negative affect on Smith & Wesson, but also on all of our Connecticut based suppliers due to potential reductions in production. (see exhibit # 3-A for list of CT, suppliers)

One reason why micro-stamping technology is flawed is the basic difference between the operation of a revolver and a semi-auto pistol. A revolver does not automatically eject cartridge cases when fired. The cartridge case remains in the cylinder. As you are aware, this legislation, SB 353, does not include revolvers. Therefore, this technology is easily defeated by just the selection of a functional firearm that does not eject cartridges.

The increased cost that would be passed along to law enforcement and other customers is not the only reason this legislation is flawed. A recent study from U.C. Davis commissioned by California legislature advised that the sole sourced micro-laser technology "could be easily removed in seconds using house hold tools". It does not seem logical to implement a process that will dramatically increase cost but would be easily defeated using common household tools.

Please understand that Smith & Wesson has partnered with law enforcement since 1852 and we are supportive of effective legislation that would support law enforcement and help solve crimes. Unfortunately, micro-stamping can be easily defeated using household tools like a nail file, or defeated simply by the selection of a revolver. Therefore, it will be ineffective in deterrence or solving of crime. Additionally, empty brass casings can be gathered by a criminal and scattered at a crime scene in order to mislead law enforcement and implicate law-abiding citizens.

For the above reasons, and for many others that have been cited by our industry's leading trade organizations, such as the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) and the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufactures' Institute, Inc. (SAAMI), we urge you to vote against SB 353.

Regards,

Paul Pluff
Director of Marketing Services
Smith & Wesson
2100 Roosevelt Ave
Springfield, MA 01104
Phone: (413) 747-3252
Fax: (413) 747-3677
<mailto:ppluff@smith-wesson.com>



Smith & Wesson



Exhibit 1-A

Common files, emery sand paper and polishing stones



Many common household tools such as these items that are available at any local hardware or home improvement store can be used to easily defeat micro-stamping process.

Exhibit 1-B

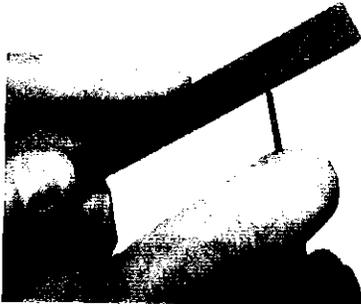


Exhibit 1-C

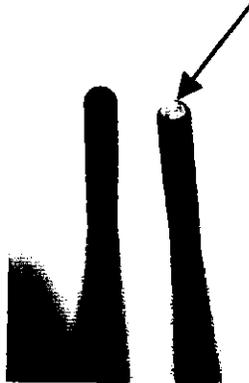


Exhibit 1-D



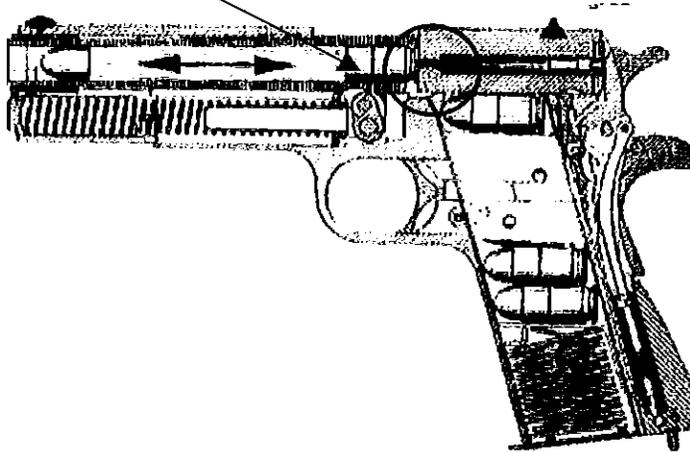
The micro stamping process laser's a control number on to parts that is approximately 25 microns in depth. (Half the thickness of the human hair). By using the lease aggressive item, the polishing stone that was purchased at a home improvement store, more then twice that depth of material used for the micro laser process can be removed with just a couple of swipes. Note Exhibit 1-C and 1-D showing two identical firing pins, one that has not been stoned and one that has. As seen in the images, the material forming top radius has been quickly removed leaving a flat surface.



Smith & Wesson®

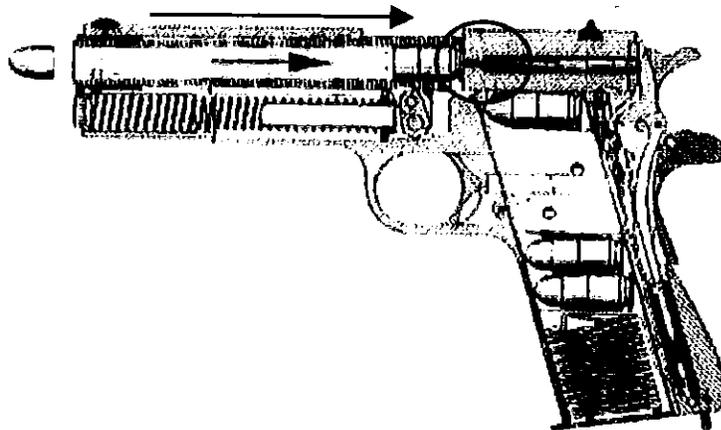
Exhibit 2-A

The functionality of the common semi-automatic pistol would cause those components with the micro-stamping to wear down the marking over a period of time leaving the identifier un-legible for matching cartridge to a make, model and serial number.



When pistol is fired, the firing pin comes forward to strike the primer of the cartridge igniting the round.

Exhibit 2-B



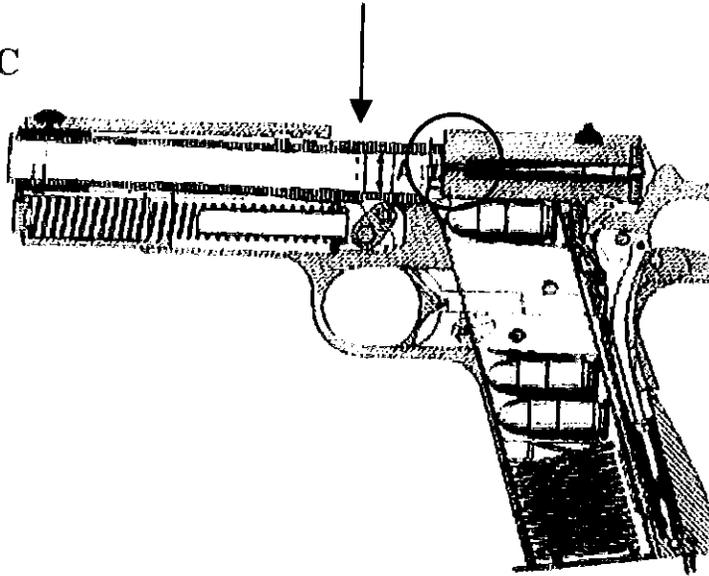
As the bullet exits the pistol, the slides starts to move rearward with the firing pin still in the forward position contacting the cartridge case.



Smith & Wesson

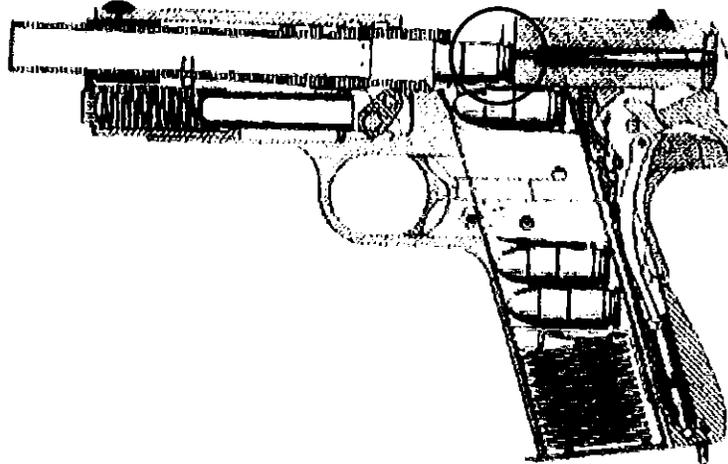


Exhibit 2-C



As slide moves rearward, that barrel and spent cartridge drops downward to allow round to be ejected (Note that the firing pin still has not fully retracted form the cartridge case)

Exhibit 2-D

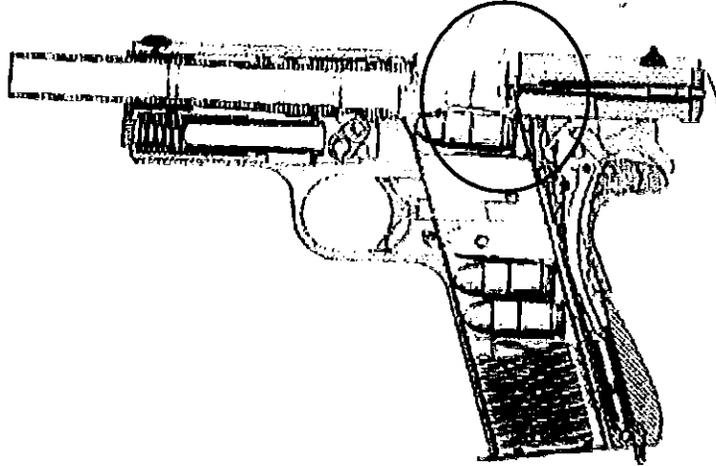


As the slide of the pistol fully retract and the barrel and casing are reaching the end of their downward movement, the firing pin is still engaged and not fully retracted.



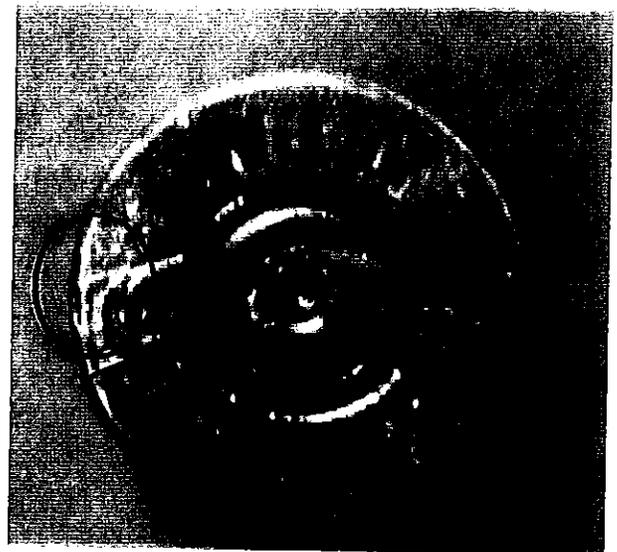
Smith & Wesson®

Exhibit 2-E



As the pistol cycles through its action, the spent cartridge case rubs against both the firing pin and the cartridge face of the slide causing wear to both surfaces.

Exhibit 2-F



Note the areas called by the arrow where the firing pin drags through the primer during the cycling of the pistol (primer swipe) and the areas within the circles where the casing has dragged against the cartridge face of the slide. This action will allow wear to both the firing pin and slide thus causing micro-stamping engraving to become un-legible.



Smith & Wesson®

Exhibit 3-A

Smith & Wesson
Connecticut Suppliers
(as of Dec 2008)

Company Confidential

	Company Name	Service or Components	Address	City	State	Zip Code	Headcount	President / CEO
2	TRI-TOWN PRECISION PLASTICS, INC.	Plastic Molded Parts	12 Bridge St	Deep River	CT	06417	170	Scott Goodspeed
6	MEC-GAR USA INC (US Distributor)	Magazines	115 Hurley Road, #60	Oxford	CT	06478	4	Edosrdo Rochelli
8	CONNECTICUT SPRING & STAMPING	Springs and Stamped Part	48 Spring Lane	Farmington	CT	06032	475	William Stevenson
9	MICROBEST	Machined Parts	670 Captain Neville Dr	Waterbury	CT	06705	120	Bob Samuelson
16	PRECISION RESOURCE	Stampings	25 Forest Parkway	Shelton	CT	06484	175	Peter Wolcott
17	ROBERT E. MORRIS CO	CNC Equipment	17 Telcott Notch Rd.	Farmington	CT	06032	75	Brad Morris
19	ELECTRO-TECH INC.	Machined Parts	480 Sand Bank Rd.	Cheshire	CT	06410	50	Peter Romano
24	SSI MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGIES	Machined Parts	675 Emmett St.	Bristol	CT	06010	35	Dave Florian
26	AMERICAN PRECISION PRODUCTS LLC	Machined Parts	61 Winding Brook Farm Rd	Watertown	CT	06795	1	Moe Bouford
28	CONN PKG MATERIALS INC.	Packaging	85 S Satellite Rd	S Windsor	CT	06074	60	Lawrence Greenfield
30	SUPERIOR PLATING COMPANY	Plating	Lacey Place	Southport	CT	06890	75	Yan Luo

Connecticut based Suppliers Headcount

1,240

Listing in Smith & Wesson Suppliers with the state of Connecticut.