I wish to submit testimony on H.B. 5040 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION. I oppose this legislation and I am asking the members of the committee to vote against this bill, for the following reasons.

First, the bill’s own claim that we need funds for more gun violence prevention programs in our violence ridden cities despite the decades of increasingly strict gun laws we already have in CT is a de facto admission such programs aren’t working. The reason why should be obvious- gun control is a political policy, not a social policy, thus gun violence programs never address the poverty and hopelessness of Hartford’s inner city neighborhoods that create the street gangs and drug trafficking causing the violence, nor do gun violence organizations ever address the traumatic stress, depression and other mental health issues that are the root cause of suicide. Claiming we need to raise taxes to buy more of what doesn’t even work now makes no sense even after saying it twice.

Second, I object to the root idea of the bill that the vast majority of lawful gun owners should be held responsible for the gun violence in our cities, and should be held responsible for reparations. All across the state, sportsmen, merchants who carry large sums of money and valuables, women who travel through unsafe areas, even off duty police officers wishing to train with their side arms, will essentially be paying the bill for criminal actions they have nothing to do with and want to protect themselves from. This committee would never dream of taxing Hispanic residents in Middletown to pay for the crimes committed by Latin Kings gang members in Hartford. Everyone of sound mind recognizes it is outrageous bigotry to claim one is the same as the other. Why then is it a sound consideration to tax a farmer in Chaplin for his deer rifle to pay for the crimes of a drug addict robbing a liquor store for heroin money in New Haven?

Third, the committee is certainly aware of the detrimental effect Connecticut’s heavy taxation is having on its residents. Nonstop increases in state income taxes, sales taxes, Social Security taxes, property taxes, fuel taxes, grocery taxes, and so on, have caused widespread unrest and economic regression, and have already driven CT residents to move away in droves. The power to tax has been proven to be the power to destroy. It is impossible to see this bill as being anything but a program to likewise hurt lawful gun owners with discriminatory taxation for sheer partisan pleasure. The sponsors of this bill and its proponents are highly unlikely to be gun owners, and therefore are highly unlikely to ever pay any such taxes themselves.

HB 5040 may have the earmarks of a noble gesture but the sentiment is only on paper. This bill shows no proof of how it will lead to any practical reduction in gun violence and it has every indication it is driven by political malice. Regardless of where anyone stands on the issue of gun control, it is still a universal truth that working to pass laws that do nothing to solve a problem is exactly the same thing as doing nothing to solve the problem. This committee already recognized this bill was a bad idea last year when it first appeared, and I therefore ask the committee to vote against this bill for the bad idea it still is.

Thank you for your attention.

-David Adametz, 21 Wall Street, Cromwell, CT 06416