February 23, 2020

Dear Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

My name is Edward Banasiak and I urge you to oppose HB5040.

I am a Retired Police Officer with 31 years of service. Twenty-two of those years, I processed crime scenes. During my career as a Police Officer I was shot in the line of duty. I support reasonable gun laws which would keep firearms out of the hands of criminals and the mentally ill. During my career as a Police Officer, I have seen victims of violence and believe they should have a right to protect themselves and their families from violence.

I am writing regarding proposed HB 5040 “An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition”.

I see where this bill would impose a 35% excise tax to the cost of ammunition. I am opposed to HB 5040. We already pay a State Tax of 6.35% and the Federal Excise Tax of 10 or 11% (depending on the type of firearm the ammunition is for) when we purchase ammunition.

The bill states funding from this proposed additional 35% Tax on Ammunition will be used “to increase funding for gun violence prevention and reduction efforts”. We already pay taxes to fund gun violence prevention and reduction efforts. They are called taxes for Prisons.

I feel this proposed 35% Tax will not be used to do anything to reduce gun violence and will not have any effect on gun violence in the State.

I am a law abiding responsible gun owner. Why should I be punished with additional taxes for the actions of irresponsible criminals who commit acts of violence with firearms? It is no different than me being forced to pay a fine for their commission of crimes. If we follow this logic of additional taxes on purchases, will we soon have additional 35% taxes on liquor and motor vehicles to fund programs to reduce drunk driving and reckless driving?

I feel this 35% Tax will cause some gun owners to practice with their firearms less often, becoming less proficient with their firearms. Having over 30 years law enforcement experience, I have come to know the value of practicing at the Range often to maintain firearms proficiency.

Just to estimate the impact this tax would have on my budget, a box of 50 rounds of Target Ammunition can cost between $10 and $20 on average, depending on the caliber. I usually shoot 100 to 200 rounds (2 to 4 boxes of 50) each time I go to the target range. This amount is larger if I go to the Range with a family members or friends. I sometimes go to the range one or two times in a week, sometimes more often. So if I go to the range, and it costs me between $20 and $80 for ammunition each time I go to the Range, this additional 35% ammo tax could cost me an estimated average of $17.50 a week or $910 a year!

I feel this 35% Tax will force me and many other individuals on limited budgets, to choose to purchase ammunition to maintain their proficiency with their firearms, to enjoy target shooting, to go hunting, or make cuts in other area of their budgets.
I know if this 35% Tax goes into effect, I will make cuts in other areas of my budget such as eating out. I will not patronize my local restaurant as often I do with my family to make up for the additional cost of ammunition caused by this 35% Tax. I will also tell the owner of the family restaurant I patronize on a regular basis, who is a friend, why I am not frequenting his establishment as often as I did. That is, it is because of this 35% Ammo Tax which was passed. I will also mention to him and other business owners, where I make cuts in my budget, the names of the State Legislators who voted for this 35% AMMO Tax.

It is my hope that if HB 5040 – a 35% Tax on Ammunition comes for a vote, You will vote NO for this bill.

Sincerely,

Edward Banasiak
Windsor Locks, CT