I oppose HB5040. I do not see how putting a 35% excise tax on all ammunition sales will make Connecticut any safer. It will actually cause the opposite to happen. While many firearm owners use their firearms for sport, most have their firearms as a form of protection to defend themselves and their families against imminent threats of violence.

Shooting a firearm with accuracy is not as easy as it looks in movies. It takes much practice to become adequate in firing a firearm with precision. Responsible gun owners know this and practice regularly. If a 35% excise tax is placed on all ammunition, then it will discourage or financially prohibit many gun owners from being able to practice and train as regularly as they currently do. This will lead to a decrease in shooting competence and an increase in unsafe gun handling.

I understand that the 35% excise tax, or a portion of it, will go towards gun violence prevention programs. Before you take my money to put towards a gun violence prevention program, you need to first sell me on what a gun violence prevention program looks like. How does one of these programs reduce gun violence? Have these programs been used in other states, and if so, with what success rate? How would one of these programs have prevented recent school shootings that sparked the recent increase in concern over gun violence in our state?

When calculating gun violence statistics in our state, most of the cases of gun violence are caused by accidental shootings and suicide. The answer to solving accidental shootings is firearm education and safety training. We do not need the government to take tax money for firearm training as many local gun clubs and organizations offer this service as an outreach service to their communities. Perhaps the government can work with gun clubs and organizations to help support their outreach education programs, which will lead to safe gun handling and a significant reduction in accidental shootings.

Suicide is the other leading cause of gun violence statistics. There are already many government bills being proposed to increase mental health support programs. We should continue to support these programs. This is a generalized issue that should not be funded by taxing gun owners through the purchase of their ammo. We should find other ways to increasing funding to support mental health programs that will include the participation of all Connecticut citizens.
In conclusion, HB5040 will not make Connecticut safer against gun violence. It has the potential to make Connecticut less safe against gun violence due to the above reasons stated. I would like my decent of HB5040 to be noted when considering the passing HB5040 into law.

Thank you,
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