I oppose H.B. 5040 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION. I regret that I am unable to testify in person, but on the evening of February 27 I must attend a meeting of the board of trustees of the East Haven Public Library. My name is Michael Enders. I live at 23 Oregon Avenue in East Haven. I am a gun owner. I own a 9mm semi-automatic pistol and a .22 caliber semi-automatic rifle. I have a pistol permit issued by the state of Connecticut and am a member of the Branford Gun Club, the Connecticut Citizens Defense League, and the National Rifle Association. I also became an NRA-certified rifle and shotgun instructor and range safety instructor so that I could teach the safe handling of rifles and shotguns to Boy Scouts working on their merit badges and to help with the range safety at the pistol range of the Branford Gun Club. I not only vote in every election, but also donate to and volunteer to serve in political campaigns. I oppose H.B. 5040 for the following reasons:

- A tax on ammunition with the funds used to support anti-gun organizations is a blatant violation of my right to free speech under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Although I fully support the rights of anti-gun organizations to make their case to lawmakers, they should not be allowed to use money extracted from the very people most likely to disagree with them to do it. I donate voluntarily to organizations that support political positions that I agree with and I would strongly resent using money that I use to purchase ammunition to support opinions I oppose. Also, no matter what political opinion is supported, using taxpayer money to support any lobbying organization is just plain wrong. It would be equally wrong if taxpayer money was used to support organizations that support the rights of gun owners.

- If one of the goals of the legislation is to discourage the use of guns to commit violent acts, it is highly unlikely to serve that purpose. A person who has enough hate in his or her heart to want to commit violence to others or to self is not going to be deterred by ammunition being a little more expensive. On the other hand …
• People who use large amounts of ammunition do not use it to commit violence unless putting holes in paper targets, wearing the paint off steel targets and breaking clay pigeons is considered violence. The purpose of such target shooting is to hone the skills of the shooter so that he or she can handle the gun safely and effectively, which may end up saving the life of the shooter or others should a stressful situation call for those skills. In other words, less ammunition sent down range would probably decrease gun safety and end up resulting in more violence if the legal owner of a gun fails to stop a threat or ends up accidentally shooting someone because of not being able to practice his skills. People who use firearms for hunting do commit violence to animals, but hunting is highly regulated by the state so that the animals hunted tend to be those that exist in such numbers that they risk starvation if their numbers are not decreased, such as deer, or the animals themselves are dangerous, such as coyotes.

• The people most affected by a tax on ammunition are people with little income or wealth. As a general rule, the neighborhoods that such people live in tend to have higher rates of violent crime and therefore, there is more need for law-abiding persons in those neighborhoods to need to use a firearm in self-defense than there would be for a person living in a more affluent neighborhood,