Testimony in OPPOSITION of House Bill Number 5040:
An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition
Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee
February 27, 2020

Co-Chairs Fonfara and Rojas, Vice Chairs Cassano, Leone, Concepcion and Meskers, Ranking Members Witkos and Davis, and Distinguished Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

I write today in opposition of proposed House Bill Number 5040, An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition, which would apparently establish an additional excise tax of 35% on ammunition sold in this state.

If passed, this bill would result in the triple-taxation of Connecticut residents, this time blatantly targeting law-abiding gun-owners who - in addition to the sales tax - already pay excise taxes on ammunition. Adding another tax is just one more straw on the backs of those exercising their constitutional right, choosing not to be a victim, and honing responsible gun-ownership and use (thereby reducing potential accidents). Furthermore, when such a tax is examined in the context of Connecticut's recent history of over-zealous gun legislation, I cannot help but see its likeness to a poll tax - penalizing lawful behavior that those in power disagree with, and wish to repress.

This new tax would hurt Connecticut businesses, as people wanting to purchase ammunition will merely do so in other states. This new tax would hurt competition shooters, such as those that compete in competitive rifle shooting (a female dominated sport where men and women compete equally), as they need to practice their sport and shooting many rounds is a vital part of that practice. This new tax would hurt regular citizens of our state who just want to be able to protect themselves and desire to practice the skills they have learned so as to adequately protect themselves.

I know that the proponents of this new tax have represented that the intent of this legislation is to secure funding for gun violence prevention and reduction efforts. However, I meet that representation with much skepticism. Even if I were to accept the morality and efficacy of such a tax, which I do not, what specific "groups" are to receive the benefits? How about the Connecticut Citizens Defense League (CCDL) an organization of 35,000 members that, just last year, successfully lobbied the legislature for a law calling for the CT Department of Education to adopt a gun safety curriculum to be available for teaching to children? How about the National Rifle Association (NRA) – that has pioneered leading gun-safety programs such as the Eddie Eagle GunSafe program for more than 30 years? I fear not. Instead, I fully believe these monies will merely be funneled back to the very anti-gun organizations that support this tax and other measures suppressing our Constitutional rights. Talk about quid pro quo.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony in opposition of House Bill 5040, and I urge the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee to halt this legislation from moving forward.