Distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, my name is James Flinn and I submit to you my testimony in opposition to HB 5040.

I live in Middletown and for the purpose of qualifying my affiliations within this debate, I do not stand here to represent the opinion of any organization.

- I am not a member of the NRA nor of CCDL.
- I am an owner of firearms.
- I hunt deer, turkey, waterfowl, pheasant, and woodcock on Connecticut’s public lands and fish in our beautiful waters.

I am aware that hunters are often seen as part of the problem by proliferating the sale of firearms and ammunition and we notoriously allow the consumers of firearms for personal protection to take the stand to protect the rights of the second amendment for us.

Hunters, like myself are often silent on the issue of gun violence prevention; too silent.

Look at the Statement of Purpose for HB 5040: "To establish an excise tax on ammunition to increase funding for gun violence prevention and reduction efforts."

I understand that politically it sends a stinging message to all the owners of firearms. It tells me that you, my representatives believe I am responsible for the proliferation of gun violence in Connecticut.

I used to live on the north side of Chicago - and experienced gun violence in my neighborhood. There was the time, when the CPD shot and killed a violent man, forcing his car to crash at the end of my block. Then there was the time, a gang member initiation ended with an innocent bystander dead with gunshot wounds on the other end of my block. One of the stray bullets pierced the window of the building across the street from me, the perpetrator ran through my backyard to escape.

Do I want to see a reduction in gun violence?  
Yes. Of course. We all do.

I would ask non-gun owners the same. To the non-gun owners, why are you not funding these efforts?

To Representatives Gilchrest, Phipps and the other co-sponsors; respectfully, I believe you are thinking small. I support your desired goal and I disagree with your tactics. Violence, will continue until all in our community want it to stop.

If you want funding for gun violence prevention, ask for it from all who support your cause not just those who purchase firearms and ammunition.

Be punitive and you look petty.  
If you really want to fund this - Go big.  
You will then have my support.