To: The Joint Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding (fintestimony@cga.ct.gov)

Re: Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Bill No. 5040 “An Act Establishing An Excise Tax On Ammunition”

I am writing in opposition to Proposed Bill No. 5040 “An Act Establishing An Excise Tax On Ammunition,” which if enacted would impose a 35% excise tax on gross earnings derived from the sale of ammunition for the nominal purpose of increasing funding for gun violence prevention and reduction efforts.

I am by vocation an attorney. I have served as a member of the Connecticut Bar Association’s Firearms Law Committee, and as a member of the Department of Public Safety’s citizens advisory committee on firearms law. I have since my high school days been involved in shooting sports, and am a NRA-certified pistol instructor.

My opposition to this bill is based on the following:

- There is little nexus between ammunition sales to law-abiding citizens and gun violence. The logic of the bill’s proponent if accepted would suggest that the General Assembly should next take up a 35% tax on automobile sales to fund drunk driving prevention.

- The excise tax will be passed on to the consumer, and at a 35% level effectively represents a “sin tax”. The imposition of a draconian tax on the exercise of rights protected by both the Federal Constitution and the Constitution of this State is patently offensive to me both as a lawyer and as a citizen.

- The proposed excise tax is regressive and will most highly burden those persons of lower income. Despite public comments by the bill’s proponent, the cost that would be imposed by this bill is not insubstantial. A case of Winchester’s generic “white box” 9mm ammunition retails in the area $230, which under this proposal would impose on the consumer a tax of approximately $80.

- The additional cost on ammunition purchases that would be imposed by this bill likely will have a chilling effect on law-abiding citizens’ participation in firearms safe handling and use training. This is a serious concern as a matter of public and personal safety.

I most strongly urge the Committee to reject this proposal.

Sincerely,

[s] Douglas W. Gillette

Douglas W. Gillette