February 24, 2020

Dear Senator Fonfara, Representative Rojas, Distinguished Members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee,

I strongly urge you to oppose H.B. 5040. This bill seems punitive, unproductive, and unfair to the firearms owners of this state. The passing of this bill could have negative unintended consequences.

The mere addition of a tax of this magnitude to something as controversial as firearms is really a slap in the face to firearm owners in CT. Many firearm owners in CT are very into the shooting sports and go to the range every week with friends and family to shoot skeet, trap, or other competitions. This is not an inexpensive sport and the ones who can go out of state will do so to purchase ammo without the excise tax.

I question the specifics of the use of this tax to fund gun violence prevention. Where is this money going? I am a father of two young boys and a husband. I, along with all the legal gun owners in CT, want a reduction in gun violence. Most gun violence in CT is happening in cities or gang related. I think the focus from the state should be on supporting the local police departments in more proactive policing. I also believe the state legislature should be increasing penalties for crimes such as theft of a firearm, larcenies involving a firearm, felons in possession of a firearm. My state senator, Senator Formica, has sponsored a bill in the Appropriations committee to increase funding for suicide prevention programs. I believe that should be done, just not on the back of the firearms owners of Connecticut. If we need funding here in CT, we need to do it without raising taxes any further.

There are many people getting their or permit to carry here in CT. Any CT residents who are purchasing a firearm, whether it be for sport or self defense, are spending a lot of money (usually in CT) on the firearm, accessories, holsters, training, and ammunition to practice. Residents with a lower income need to make sacrifices while still meeting their goal of a firearm for self defense. Personally, I would rather have the permit holder have as much practice as possible. An ammo tax will have a direct, measurable, and negative effect on how much somebody will be able to practice shooting at the range. If somebody is not able to go out of state to purchase, they will shoot 35% less. Do you want the residents carrying firearms everyday to be less proficient or more proficient? Also, if this bill was meant, in any way, to create a barrier for criminals to purchase ammo, it will not. The insignificant amount (I assume) of ammo that a drug dealer or criminal needs is not enough to create a financial burden with this tax.

There is no upside to this bill, it is simply a bad bill. I hope that you will consider these points and oppose this bill.

Sincerely,

Kyle Gless

Waterford