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My name is Jacob Harman. I am 29 years old. I was born in Norwich at Backus Hospital, like so many of those who may hear this testimony. I was raised in Voluntown, and I am now a homeowner in Gales Ferry. I, like so many other middle class citizens of Connecticut, work in the aerospace industry. Like many of those middle class citizens, I am also a proud pistol permit holder, and I strongly oppose HB 5040, and the seemingly criminal 35% taxation of ammunition.

Like many in the rural parts of Connecticut, I grew up surrounded by firearms. I was instructed to respect, not to fear, those tools. When I was 12, I took the hunter’s safety class, and upon completion, was given my first firearm. That little 20 gage doesn’t see much use these days, but it’s an important part of my life’s story. The times spent hunting pheasant with my father, and later on with friends, are some of my most cherished memories.

As I grew older, the innocence of childhood gave way to the truths of this world; there are evil people out there who will try to hurt you, take advantage of you, and destroy you. I wish I could say that those criminals didn’t exist, but I am a realist. Those types of criminals, be they petty thieves or crazed killers, are part of our society. As such, I decided to get my pistol permit at 21, so that I would be able to protect myself if the need arises. It should be noted that I hope and pray that the need to defend myself never comes, but I’d rather be prepared than not.

The right to defend our homes, ourselves, our families, and our property is just part of the reason why I oppose the 35% ammunition tax. This tax would put a financial strain on innocent people, citizens who have done nothing wrong, who have gone through the extensive process of obtaining a pistol permit, that could prevent them from training with their firearm, from becoming proficient with the skills to defend themselves from potential threats. You can own the fastest race car in the world, but if you never drive it, the 20 year old kid who goes to the track in his 1996 Miata every weekend would outdrive you in a heartbeat. The same logic applies to firearms; if you don’t practice and don’t prepare, you’ll be at a disadvantage if the need to defend yourself even comes.

Secondary to that point, is the fact that this tax would prevent people from getting into shooting sports. Whether its trap shooting, cowboy action shooting, long range precision shooting, or three gun tournaments, this tax would stop many people from pursuing a sport that can lead to a lifelong passion, great friends, and a wholesome community. I have met people of all races, ages, religions, and genders at shooting events. It truly is an accepting, upbeat community of outstanding people. To see that community fall apart because of this tax would be devastating.

In closing, I would look at the recent relocation statistics for Connecticut. People are leaving in droves. In 2019, Connecticut was the third highest state in the country for people leaving. 62% of moves were outbound. This tax, along with the other restrictive gun laws, could force more people out. Think of all the skilled labor, all the tradesmen in the state, who put a
priority on their second amendment rights. Now imagine just half of those people leaving, and all those years of experience being lost. This could easily lead to companies moving from the state, though sadly that is something Connecticut is used to at this point. Without those companies paying taxes, who would carry the additional burden?

I do find it somewhat ironic that his bill is being proposed in February, the month that we celebrate George Washington’s birthday. I wonder what he would think of this tax. I can only imagine there would be some tea thrown in the Connecticut River.

Thank you for taking the time to hear my testimony.

Jacob Harman