To the members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee

Re: H.B. No. 5040 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION.

I’m strongly opposed to an excise tax on a basic constitutional right. A short digression is in order relative to the history of the Poll tax and the 24th amendment, simplified at this link:

http://www.americaslibrary.gov/jb/modern/jb_modern_polltax_1.html

Many Southern states adopted a poll tax in the late 1800s. This meant that even though the 15th Amendment gave former slaves the right to vote, many poor people, both blacks and whites, did not have enough money to vote.

"Do you know I’ve never voted in my life, never been able to exercise my right as a citizen because of the poll tax?" "Mr. Trout" to Mr. Pike, interviewer, Atlanta, Georgia. American Life Histories, 1936 - 1940.

More than 20 years after "Mr. Trout" spoke those words, the poll tax was abolished. At the ceremony in 1964 formalizing the 24th Amendment, President Lyndon Johnson noted that: "There can be no one too poor to vote." Thanks to the 24th Amendment, the right of all U.S. citizens to freely cast their votes has been secured.

"There can be no one too poor to vote." AND "There can be no one too poor to bear arms in defense of himself and the state.” As stated in the CT constitution.

Ammunition is already expensive, and a day of casual range time can see 6 boxes go down range in an hour. That’s about $150 in ammo and range time.

More serious training scenarios, and I think the legislature prefers the 275,000 criminal-free voting block of carry permit holders to be able to safely use their weapons when needed in a home or extra-home defense situation. That training typically uses a minimum of 500 rounds (10 boxes). My preferred round runs about $20 a box, so a $7 dollar add-on gets very pricy. Maybe I’m lucky that I can afford this. But many can’t. Consider the racist impact and disparate impact such an excise tax can have! Here’s a reference taken from labor law: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Disparate_impact

A poor but lawful gun owner will be disparately impacted by this regressive tax, much like the Poll Tax I earlier cited. And when you do the demographics, some of that impact will fall clearly along racial lines. My rights are no greater than that of a lower income woman of color defending herself and her children from an abuser. My rights to train and exercise a basic freedom should not be held hostage to a Poll / Ammunition tax.

It’s bad legislation, and should not move forward!

Bill Hillman