February 10th 2020

Dear esteemed members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee:

I wish to express my fierce OPPOSITION to H.B. 5040 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION. This bill is so egregious and so flawed in its logic that it should be swiftly and aggressively rejected.

Representative Gilchrest will tell you that the money raised by this tax will go toward “gun violence” prevention. I don’t trust that any tax revenue will be actually used for the purposes stated and if it will, why is that burden placed on law-abiding gun-owners, who aren’t committing these acts of violence?

I also posit that these funds are not necessary considering that Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro recently secured $25 million in gun violence prevention research funding. It is unconstitutional. A right should not be subject to an excise tax and certainly not such an exorbitant one at that. This bill is, in my estimation, a biased attack and a spiteful punishment against gun owners.

It unfairly disadvantages individuals of lower socioeconomic class. This isn’t just my opinion but was also the opinion of many state representatives and senators when something similar was proposed last session. One only has to imagine the single mother, on a fixed income, who lives in a crime-ridden city, who relies on training, practicing and carrying her firearm to protect herself and her family to see it as unfairly disadvantaging her.

It will be utterly ineffectual at reducing suicides, which account for 66% of all gun-related deaths.

It will be ineffectual at reducing gun crime. This isn’t an argument that “criminals don’t obey the law”. It is instead a logical and practical one. The vast majority of criminals obtain their guns, and the ammo, by stealing it or by buying these stolen items on the black market. Criminals by and large do not frequent gun shops nor buy guns at retail. Even if they did, the current statute requires that all ammunition purchases require a permit. Even without these barriers and factors, to think that a felon who wishes to buy ammo will be dissuaded from doing so because of a tax, is delusional. Simply put, in any way you look at it and, in any reality, this proposal will not make us safer.

How much more can and should we gun owners tolerate?

But don’t take my word for it. Read the thousands of emails and letters that have been delivered to the committee. Go to Representative Gilchrest’s Facebook page where she announces her tax. Read the hundreds and hundreds of comments, both from her supporters….and her critics, and then decide. The wisdom is in the room!

Dr. Walt Kupson
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