My name is Joe LaPorta, I am from Madison, and I submit my testimony in opposition to H.B.5040, “An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition.”

This bill would impose an additional 35% tax on the sale of ammunition to fund research on gun violence prevention and reduction efforts. I am confident that we all agree that the prevention of gun violence is a worthwhile endeavor, but I believe this bill is a disingenuous attempt at raising revenue and imposing further gun control measures on the citizens of this state.

As a member of the Guilford Sportsmen’s Association, I have a strong familiarity with the many sporting purposes firearms have been used by Americans for generations. I do not believe the sponsor of this bill has even a cursory understanding of these historic, safe, sporting uses. This is made evident by her statement in February of last year, when she asked, “how much ammunition does someone really need to protect their self?” The fact that only the segment of the population who exclusively own a firearm for self defense was considered shows no due diligence was applied in the conceptualization of this bill.

What is even more deliberate, however, are the actions taken by the majority party in Hartford which are in direct conflict with the stated objective of this bill. In the aftermath of the Sandy Hook tragedy, the Statewide Firearms Trafficking Task Force was only funded for one year. Last year, a proposal was made in the Senate by Republican Rob Sampson to reinstate this program, but every Democrat Senator voted no. Another amendment was put forward in both the House and the Senate to increase the penalty for the theft of a firearm, but these too were voted down by every Democrat in both chambers.

The proponents of bills like this one like to talk about being tough on gun violence, but their actions speak louder than their words. They are merely pandering to the extremists of their party while voting against common-sense provisions which would take decisive action towards reducing gun violence, not merely researching it as this bill aims to do. They are completely out of touch with what we, the people, have sent them to Hartford to do. I call upon all elected officials to oppose H.B.5040, and I call upon the citizens of this state to tell their legislators to stop the partisan, theatrical politics.