Greetings,

My name is David LaPorte, I am writing today to voice my **staunch** opposition to HB 5040. I am a career Firefighter/EMT with over 26 years’ experience in the fire service. I have been involved in shooting sports in Connecticut for the past 41 years. I received my CT State Pistol Permit as soon as I was able to permissible by law in August of 1983 and have maintained it without interruption. I have been an active member in good standing of The Rockville Fish and Game Club since 1999. I have held a Federal Firearms “Curio & Relics” License since 2011 and renewed it three times. I have been background checked many times, for both FFL license renewal and every time I purchase a firearm. I consider myself a peaceably armed citizen. I carry a personal defensive firearm at all times permissible, and have since receiving my permit. Because I live in rural Ashford with no town police force, I am armed in my own home. It was in my own home the one and only time I drew a firearm and held it at the ready for a potential intruder on early Christmas morning 2012.

Once again, the CT General Assembly is displaying its insatiable hunger for revenue without ever a mention of spending cuts. The standard solution to any problem in the state is just “throwing money at it” instead of doing the hard work of solving the core issues. It is the second point I will address in my testimony.

First, state government as a whole needs to understand once and for all; that the legitimate firearms owners of this once great state are not the problem. EVER! As a whole, they are the most law-abiding and peaceable citizens of our state, and across the country. There has been an accelerated erosion of our Second Amendment Rights at every level of government since 1986, and even faster here in Connecticut. Unfortunately, we are seen and portrayed as political opposition by most members of the Democrat Party, as well as some very squishy of the few elected Republicans. Therefore, we are attacked with impunity at every turn, because “GUNS ARE BAD” with no exception. No, guns are not bad, they are inanimate tools that are misused by bad people performing bad acts. Also, it does not matter what type, caliber, operation, magazine capacity, or features a firearm has. A firearm in the hands of an individual that is bent on doing harm to others makes the individual dangerous, not the firearm. Usually, before those bad acts are even perpetrated, multiple laws are broken in the mere access and possession of firearms and ammunition. Somehow, elected officials think that just one more gun law will do the trick, while not ever understanding or ignoring the real problems that cause gun violence. Why is it every night on the evening news, all the shootings seem to occur in and immediately surrounding places like Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Waterbury, New London, or Willimantic? I can personally attest to the high rate of firearms ownership in my town. Yet I cannot find any record of one person shooting another (or any murder in general) as far back as I can search public records. In my opinion, it is because there is a known high rate of civilian firearms ownership that deters violent crime, and the lack of the tribal warfare that occurs in the largest cities and towns. Also, every gun law on the books is reactive, meaning they DO NOTHING to prevent a violent gun crime unless an individual is willing to obey it. It is simply one more thing the bad actor gets charged with (and then pleas down) after the fact. A good recent example of this is the 2018 “Ethan’s Law”. Unless law enforcement was to go house to house on a constant basis to inspect everyone’s firearm storage, it will never do anything to prevent someone that is careless from being careless with a
firearm. They will just receive another criminal charge after someone accidentally kills themselves or someone else.

With the passage of the unconstitutional/intolerable acts of tyranny in post Sandy Hook 2013, all of the state’s gun owners were condemned for the act of ONE mentally ill individual. Adam Lanza committed a multitude of felonies, including the murder of his mother, before ever setting foot at Sandy Hook Elementary. Not one law on the books before or since would have done anything to prevent such an act, as is patently obvious to anyone outside of government. So now, in order to purchase ammunition at a retail outlet or firearms dealer, an individual must have a state pistol permit, an “Eligibility Certificate to Purchase a Pistol or Revolver”, an “Eligibility Certificate to Purchase Long Guns”, or an “Ammunition Certificate.” Does the CT General Assembly really believe this is where and how the criminal element gets their ammunition? Does the CT General Assembly really believe that the criminal element possesses any of these certifications requiring a clean background to get or keep? That bit of nonsense did nothing but penalize hunters, both in and out of state, from being able to purchase their small amounts of ammunition required for zeroing their firearms and taking of game. It also penalized those firearm owners that don’t have a carry permit and maybe own one firearm for personal defense in their home. They are unable to purchase their own ammo to stay proficient or properly defended with their firearm. Since the answer to my questions is obviously “NO”, then we must assume that the real target once again is the legitimate gun owner of Connecticut, and the continual erosion of our Second Amendment Rights. Along with being contrary to the U.S. Constitution, where scholars continually argue over the meaning of the twenty seven words in the Second Amendment, The Connecticut Constitution is even clearer. Article The First, Section 15 states: Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state. It says “ARMS”, not muskets or any other defined weapon. Yet constantly, state government officials violate their oath of office that goes: “You do solemnly swear (or affirm) that you will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, so long as you continue a citizen thereof; and that you will faithfully discharge, according to law, the duties of the Office of State Representative to the best of your abilities; so help you God.”

The other problem with this tax is where the funds are going. I suppose the Connecticut General Assembly finds it amusingly ironic that the money would go to “gun violence prevention and reduction efforts,” which are nothing more than all the GUN CONTROL PROONENTS busily working to undermine our rights. Imagine how great it would be funding gun control on the backs of the gun owners. I can guarantee you this, just like the moronic plastic bag tax, you will NEVER realize your dream of never ending cash flow. Because we live in a small state, out of state ammunition purchases will be easy and the new norm.

This nonsense didn’t fly last year because Representative Gilchrest asked for the moon at a level of 50%. It isn’t going to fly this year by asking for less, because just like with tolls, the public is aware and in opposition. Tax code is used by government to change behavior. It will not change the behavior of the violent criminals, but it will change that of the legitimate gun owner.

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