Distinguished Joint Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee members:

Testimony in opposition of House Bill 5040: An Act Establishing a 35% excise tax on ammunition.

My name is Robert LaQuerre and I reside in Cromwell, CT. I am a member and officer in the Bell City Rifle Club, Inc. Five-hundred plus members strong our club is committed to continuing our tradition of providing a safe and enjoyable facility for the recreational pursuit of the shooting sports. The purpose of our organization to teach and promote the development of the importance of such characteristics as honesty, good fellowship, self-discipline, team play, self-reliance and adherence to the rules of safety in handling and using firearms.

I am also a member of the CT Citizens Defense League. Thirty-thousand plus members strong, we are a non-partisan, grass roots organization advocating for the right to keep and bear arms (RKBA) in Connecticut. The members of the two organizations I belong to are all constituents of yours; we are under attack, again; we are all members of a large voting bloc not to be ignored and we will remember! Be warned, with elections right around the corner you are putting yourself in jeopardy of losing your seats if you endorse this legislation.

Those of us who legally purchase ammunition in Connecticut have already been fingerprinted and background checked at the municipal, state and federal levels. The proposed legislation will not prevent any criminal from illegally obtaining guns or ammunition that has intent to commit violent crimes. Gun owners in Connecticut already pay a high price to lawfully own and safely use their firearms. This additional tax will only further price out law-abiding citizens’ ability to train, participate in competitions, and hunt. This onerous tax will only make it more difficult for my children & grandchildren to become proficient in the safe handling of firearms and the shooting sports.

A 35 percent tax on ammunition would put more people at risk. Lower income individuals who typically live in more dangerous neighborhoods will likely be priced out the most effective means of gun safety which is target practice and developing safe handling skills. These residents will be disproportionately impacted by this tax. It is clear that Representative Gilchrest wants to punish law-abiding people who enjoy the shooting sports. The real reason for this bill is obviously based on contempt for the 2nd Amendment and the Connecticut Constitution which states, “Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself [or herself] and the state” (adopted 1818). It is openly hostile and self-serving. Shame on you Representative Gilchrest, Matthew Lesser and those of you who support this bill.
Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony.

Respectfully,
Robert LaQuerre
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