Honorable Committee Members,

My name is Jordan Levine and I live in New Haven. First off, let me say that I am not a person with a room full of firearms and I do not support the NRA. I am however, someone who opposes any attempt to undermine one of our rights, whether it be the 2nd amendment or any other. I also oppose anything that would inherently make someone more vulnerable to acts of violence. I OPPOSE HB 5040

Regardless of our respective views on the second amendment, we all want to end violence. The only difference between us is the means in which we believe would be effective.

I live in New Haven and I’m aware of the violence that plagues its residents, especially in lower income neighborhoods. During the press release, it was said that a 50 round box of handgun ammunition costs between $10 and $15 and that the 35% tax would only amount to a negligible $3-$5. This number was most likely chosen because it is the least expensive box available to purchase, but this ammunition type is also prohibited at most ranges because of the materials it is made of. In order for someone to safely operate a firearm, they need to be comfortable with it, and becoming comfortable requires practice. In order for someone to practice, they need affordable ammunition. The cheapest ammunition available comes to $11.25 for 50 rounds so you weren’t wrong there, but this is only when bought in a bulk amount of 1000 rounds for $235. Bought in fewer quantities, the cost per round increases. We all know how Costco works. 35% of this comes to $82.25 which brings the total cost to a whopping $317.25.

After paying for the permit, the cost of a firearm can range from a few hundred dollars to in some cases, over a thousand. This is easily as much as a months rent or more for some people. Then we must buy a safe, the proper holster, and ammunition while also having to pay to go to the range to practice. Owning and becoming comfortable with a firearm is a considerable investment.

The creators of this bill say that it is supposed to help prevent gun violence, and the primary beneficiaries of this prevention are the people who live in lower income neighborhoods, yet these are the same people who will be affected the most by a tax on their right to defend themselves and their families.

If you pass this bill, some of the people you want to protect will have to decide whether to defend themselves and their families against acts of violence, or to keep their lights on. That is a fact.

If you pass this bill, the cost of ownership of a firearm and the training required to stay proficient and safe in that ownership, will increase, resulting in the public being less safe, and more accidents occurring with firearms. That is a fact.

If you pass this bill, people will travel out of state to purchase ammunition, further hurting Connecticut’s already damaged economy. That is a fact.

There are ways to reduce gun violence in our state but another tax on its residents and a tax on our right to protect our families is not one of them.
Thank you for your time.
I would be happy to answer any questions.