February 27, 2020

TO: Connecticut Finance, Revenue, & Bonding Committee

Subj: Public Hearing comments: HB 5040

I am urging the committee to vote against this misguided proposal. Rational as follows:

1. Penalizing legal gun owners for practicing a constitutionally protected right is wrong. What other parts of the constitution are you considering to tax? Free speech, right to assemble, equal opportunity (rhetorical question)?

2. Linkage between legal gun ownership and violent crime is not established. Using the same rational, would you support a tax on auto sales to fight car jackings or perhaps a tax on laptop computers to address white collar crime? Linking legally possessed inert objects to potential criminal activity for revenue is wrong (although it provides boundless opportunities!).

3. In Connecticut, all ammunition purchasers are vetted to make sure the ammunition isn’t transferred by retailers to criminals. A punitive tax will do nothing to improve public safety since only licensed individuals can buy ammunition anyway. It will take hard earned dollars away from other areas of household budgets like retirement savings, medical costs, education, child care, and other needs.

4. Connecticut taxes are already sufficient. The ability of licensed individuals to purchase ammo is not responsible for the cost of crime in Connecticut. As a recreational shooter, I estimate this to be an additional $300 - $500 in taxes per year. Already facing Connecticut’s plethora of high taxes and potential tolls, it’s just too much. Redirect some of the existing revenue if highly effective programs have been identified which will cut crime (please share them too).

5. Gun owners already pay their share of additional taxes via the Pittman-Robertson act which everyone benefits from.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Please do the right thing, and reject this misguided proposal.

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