Testimony in opposition to proposed Bill 5040
AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION
Thursday, February 29, 2020

To the honored members of the finance, revenue, and bonding committee, thank you for your time and service to our great state and for reading my testimony. My name is Dan Marcil, and I live in Thomaston. With all due respect, I urge you to OPPOSE proposed Bill 5040. I believe this excise tax places an unfair burden on a subset of the people for a government program (or programs - we really just don’t know) of questionable value. I would invite you to please investigate the following points:

- **Research has been done already and continues at the Federal level**- In January 2013, President Barack Obama issued an executive order earmarking nearly $10 million for the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) to improve knowledge of the causes of firearm violence, what might help prevent it, and how to minimize its burden on public health. Since then, the Congress has addressed the issue, stating the “CDC has the authority to conduct research on the causes of gun violence.” Late 2019 saw the Fiscal Year 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations bill which includes $25 million to invest into gun violence research. I ask why tax the citizens of Connecticut again, when federal funds and resources are there?

- **The blanket term “Gun violence” encompasses several different aspects - some of which are not at all suited to legislation**. For instance:
  - Two-thirds of deaths-by-gun are suicides, and seven-eighths of those suicides are men. So counterintuitively, the lion’s share of the “Gun deaths” problem is in fact more precisely described as a men’s health problem. Solutions to this problem are vastly different than common gun controls being proposed. Background checks, banning weapons, magazines, etc will not be helpful, nor will they resolve other aspects like gang violence, where the guns used are often stolen. By avoiding a “One size fits all” approach, I believe we can be more effective at targeting each aspect separately, without infringements on rights.

- **This excise tax is discriminatory** - Like many gun control laws, this tax hurts those in low income areas most, who may have an increased need for protection. It also makes a subset group (gun owners, sportspeople, and competitive shooters) on the hook to pay for these yet unknown and questionable programs.

- **It would increase the cost to stay proficient** - We all saw the response by Jack Wilson to stop a mass murderer at the West Freeway Church of Christ. That proficiency takes practice. Does Rep Gilchrist really want to make it more difficult for good people to be competent shooters, when they are the immediate responders to a crime?

In closing, I believe that this excise tax is unnecessary at best, and a punitive attack on gun owners at worst. Why don’t we try a new approach - working together to solve the problems of all violence in our society without trampling on the freedoms of others? Curbing violence, reducing suicides and stopping crime are all noble goals, and if this or other gun-control related legislation were only framed differently, I truly believe people on both sides of the gun debate would work diligently together on the same problems. Thank you for your time and attention, and if you have any
questions, I will be happy to answer them.

Respectfully yours,
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