February 26th 2020

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY
210 CAPITOL AVE, HARTFORD, CT 06106

WRITTEN TESTOMONY FOR HB5040

My name is Adam Ordway I am a resident of Berlin, Connecticut and also a Firefighter, Paramedic and Army Combat Veteran. This letter serves as my written testimony in OPPOSITION of HB 5040.

Let me first start by mentioning that this bill is not only unconstitutional but can be used to set a dangerous precedent that all constitutional rights can be taxed to the point that only citizens who can afford the fees and taxes set forth by our government will able to exercise their constitutional rights. Should we place a tax on practicing your religion? How about an excise tax on all newspapers, media subscriptions and any digital news sources? If it now acceptable to tax the average citizen out of one constitutional right how could you as my representative tell me that it won’t be done to another constitutional right, you may not like or disagree with? All that HB5040 will accomplish is that it will make it unaffordable for many law-abiding citizens within Berlin to exercise a constitutional right guaranteed to them under the U.S. constitution.

Next, I would like to discuss the language within the very short and vague bill titled HB 5040 introduced by Representative Gilchrest from the 18th district. The Statement of Purpose claims “To establish an excise tax on ammunition to increase funding for gun violence prevention and reduction efforts.” Through listening to comments that Rep. Gilchrest has made in public hearings and through social media she has indicated that these funds will be used by private organizations for “gun violence prevention” such as Moms Demand Action, Everytown for Gun Safety and other similar organizations who claim to fund gun violence prevention in inner cities. My question is when did we start funding any private organization with public funds and why is this going to be acceptable? Furthermore, will these funds be tracked? If not, how can we
guarantee that these funds will not be used to fund political campaigns? It is no secret that these types of organizations have been known to donate to one specific political party throughout the nation. I would hope that as my representative you would have a problem with political power being used to fund or promote a certain political party.

Lastly, Rep Gilchrest believes that citizens who partake in responsible gun use whether it be competition shooting, collecting or for personal protection should pay for the damage that others cause while breaking the law within our cities. Although I feel the violence that occurs in many areas of our state is in need of attention and potentially added funding from the state, I do not feel that I as a gun owner should have to pay for it simply because I exercise a certain constitutional right. This is also the same right that would potentially defend me or my family from the same type of violence. I urge you to vote in opposition of this unconstitutional bill and look forward to a discussion that would address this issue, without making a constitutional right unaffordable for many of your citizens. I will also remind you that you swore to uphold and defend the constitutional of the State of Connecticut and United States when you were first elected and each time you were reelected.

I would like to personally thank you for taking the time to listen to my concerns. HB5040 is not only vague and unconstitutional, but it does not provide clear guidance to how these funds can be used. I hope you vote NO against HB5040 so we can find other ways to help address inner city violence without making it more difficult for ME to exercise MY constitutional rights.

SINCERELY,

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