State of Connecticut
General Assembly
Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding

Re: Opposition to H.B. 5040, An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition

February 21, 2020

I am a firearm owner, permit holder and retired police officer writing in opposition to H.B. 5040, An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition, introduced by Representative Jillian Gilchrest.

The act, as proposed, will impose an additional thirty five percent tax on lawful firearm owners, in addition to other federal and state taxes on ammunition. Connecticut gun owners already face onerous fees and taxes to engage in their lawful and constitutional pursuit of shooting sports or defensive firearm use. The stated purpose of the act, to provide unspecified “funds for gun violence prevention” imposes financial responsibility and burdens on lawful firearm owners who have no involvement in or responsibility for so called “gun violence”.

As a matter of fact, the proposed bill likely will have the effect of reducing safety rather than enhancing it. The tax would discourage law-abiding citizens from practicing regularly to be safe and proficient with their firearms for lawful purposes such as self-defense, competition, and hunting. It would also discourage recreational shooting by law-abiding citizens and make Connecticut retailers uncompetitive against retailers outside of the state.

The tax would not hinder criminals, who steal ammunition or acquire it in small quantities on the black market and who would not have Connecticut ammunition certificates to lawfully purchase ammunition and be subject to this tax and thus would not comply.

The common theme of legislative efforts to pass so called “gun violence” or “gun safety” bills has been to focus attention on lawful and constitutional gun owners rather than criminals. In many respects, it is much easier to pass laws restricting the rights of people who obey laws than it is to remove illegally acquired and possessed weapons from criminals.

In summary, the proposed bill does nothing to prevent so called “gun violence”, nothing to promote so called “gun safety” and merely punishes law abiding gun owners while actually diminishing safety. For these reasons, I urge the Committee not to approve the bill.

Michael Patten
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