I have lived, paid taxes and owned firearms in CT for 29 years.

A Connecticut legislator has now proposed a 35% tax on the exercise of a constitutional right.

That’s incredible to me. Imagine if our legislature decided that I must pay a tax to speak here today. Or how about a tax for attending the church of my choice.

You might say well that’s different, those are important rights protected by the 1\textsuperscript{st} Amendment.

But what’s more important than the right to protect yourself, your home and your family? These are rights protected by the 2\textsuperscript{nd} amendment.

Even more offensive is the fact that this tax would be used to “increase funding for gun violence prevention and reduction efforts.”

What a curious phrase this is. First it references so-called “gun violence.” I can tell you that not one of my guns has ever taken it upon itself to commit an act of violence.
As much as you may want to pretend otherwise, inanimate objects do not commit acts of violence. There is no such thing as knife violence, rock violence or club violence. It’s people, bad people, who commit acts of violence.

In the second part of the phrase it vaguely references preventing and reducing violence through “efforts.” Don’t we already have extensive laws that criminalize violence? Don’t we pay law enforcement to prevent and reduce violence by getting bad people off the streets?

We all know where these tax revenues would go. They’d go to groups bent on eroding the second amendment even further than this state has already done.

And what good will this tax do? Would it have stopped an insane person from murdering 26 people at Sandy Hook elementary in 2012? Of course not.

Or how about reducing the murders in our inner cities? On January 4, Hartford had its first homicide of the year, a fatal shooting in the early morning in the North End. Yamil Rohena, a 24 yr. old convicted felon shot and killed 27-year-old Kwadir Paris. Mr. Rohena was also charged with criminal possession of a firearm.

Mr. Rohena is the same person who, in November of 2016, opened fire in a Wethersfield Avenue home with seven children inside during an argument that he had started with a neighbor. Barely 3 years later he’d be free and shoot and kill Mr. Paris.
Mr. Rohena cannot even legally purchase ammunition in CT. So do you really think that a 34% tax on ammunition would have stopped this “gun violence” caused by Mr. Rohena?

Or perhaps if the ammunition tax was in place, it could have funded public service announcements on “gun violence” which would have discouraged Mr. Rohena from murdering Mr. Paris. I’m not a mind reader but no one in this room believes this.

So the state is punishing me and all my brother and sister gun owners for our exercise of our constitutionally protected right to bear arms because of acts of violence committed by criminals.

If the state is going to go down this road then I would propose another tax. As of 2017, the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration found that CT had the highest rate of drunk driving deaths in the nation. Out of 278 fatal car accidents, 43% involved a drunk driver. This equates to approximately 120 drunk drivers. Consistent with the concept of “gun violence” let’s call this “car violence.”

So let’s propose an added tax on gasoline to “increase funding for car violence prevention and reduction efforts.” Why not? Driving a car isn’t even a constitutional right. Why shouldn’t we all be punished for the sins of these relatively few drunk drivers?

Well because were not those drunk drivers. Punish them, not me. And why should we gun owners be punished for the violence of criminals?
Do you really want to reduce “gun violence”? Three steps: (1) Enforce existing laws; (2) increase the police presence in high crime areas; and (3) increase prison sentences for those who use a gun in the commission of a crime.

The proposed ammunition tax would (1) have no effect on crime; (2) impose a punitive tax on the exercise of a constitutional right; and (3) unfairly discriminate against lower income gun owners.

Thank you.