Public Comments on HB 5040 An Act Establishing An Excise Tax On Ammunition

HB 5040, proposed by Rep. Gilchrest, should not be passed out of committee.

What problem is this bill intended to address? That is the immediate question I had when hearing news of this proposed bill. The text of the bill is quite vague on details. The bill does not define a clear problem, or propose any measurable solution. The housedems.ct.gov website says the stated purpose of the bill is to “… support gun violence prevention and reduction efforts in affected communities …”

That is an admirable objective, but is extremely vague. Apparently there is a problem in the district Rep. Gilchrest represents, which her community is unable to solve and requires the assistance of the entire state. If HB 5040 is truly a thoughtful bill, worthy of serious consideration, the following questions should be publicly discussed by the committee.

- Is this problem something where existing state laws do not adequately deter the people perpetuating violence?
- Has Rep. Gilchrest clearly explained her definition of the term “gun violence” in this context, and provided details on how it is affecting the district she represents?
- If the current laws are being enforced, and felons removed from CT streets, then who are these people in Rep. Gilchrest’s district that are committing violent acts with firearms?
- Is this violence perpetrated by the legal firearms owners this proposed bill targets?

Using a firearm to threaten citizens is currently illegal in the state of CT, regardless of whether the person committing a violent act discharges the firearm or not. It is illegal to obtain any firearm in CT without a permit. People convicted of various crimes are barred from legal possession of a firearm. CT now has “red flag” laws that allow for removal of lawfully owned firearms from people in some situations. The entire state of CT has a network of very strong laws in place. With each new gun control law that has been passed in CT over the past decade, the public has been told the new law is a solution to “gun violence”.

The reality is that there are existing laws in place that are supposed to address the problem in Rep. Gilchrest’s district. The district I live in does not have this problem. In fact, there are very few districts in CT that have high levels of violence committed by people in which a firearm is used illegally. Perhaps Rep. Gilchrest should discuss this problem her district is having with Rep. Fishbein, from my district? Craig is very knowledgeable about the subject. No doubt he can provide useful information that works with all the stakeholders in the community. This includes the citizens, voters and taxpayers who lawfully and peacefully exercise the protected civil right to self-defense.

Respectfully submitted,
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