February 26, 2020

Re: HB5040: AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION

To: Chairmen Fonfara and Rojas, Ranking Member Witkos and Davis and the members of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee

We support Rep. Gilchrest's and other sponsoring legislators’ efforts to raise revenue and to find much needed funding for community-based programs working to reduce community level gun violence, that has been lacking in this state.

CAGV’s agenda, and our focus, this session is on a) strengthening our Risk Warrant/ Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO), a proven solution to reducing gun violence, and b) creating a permanent commission to focus on reducing community gun violence, that is most prevalent in cities like Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport: The two measures we believe will have the biggest impact on reducing gun violence.

The annual cost of gun violence in Connecticut is estimated at $1.2 Billion (The US Congress Joint Economic Committee:2019, Gifford’s Law Center, US Bureau of Economic Analysis.)

The burden of gun violence in Connecticut falls disproportionately on communities of color. Approximately 56 percent of the state’s gun homicide victims are Black; however, only 10 percent of the state’s population is Black. Similarly, the Latinx population is only 14 percent of the state’s population, however they account for approximately 23 percent of gun homicide victims in the state. (Center for American Progress’ analysis of the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “Injury Prevention and Control: Data and Statistics (WISQARS): Fatal Injury Data.)

There is a clear trend around the country to invest in urban gun violence prevention and intervention programs, that are working. California, Maryland, Massachusetts and New Jersey have already established such programs and have made substantial financial commitments to such community level prevention and intervention programs. CT has always been a leader in gun violence prevention, and as a result, maintains a low gun death rate. However more must be done.

The establishment of a permanent Community Level Gun Violence Prevention Commission would bring, law enforcement, state legislators, public health experts, advocates and survivors at the same table to find evidence based community solutions to the gun violence that has created a public health crisis in our cities. Such common-sense solutions require state level financial support and coordination.

We support Rep. Gilchrest's efforts to fund solutions to reduce community gun violence. The state needs to increase its funding for gun violence prevention, specifically in communities most plagued by gun violence.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Stein
Executive Director
CT Against Gun Violence