To: The Joint Committee on Finance, Revenue and Bonding.

Subject: House Bill 5040

Distinguished Joint Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee members:

My name is Jeff Verbickas and I am a resident of Torrington, Connecticut. I wish to voice my opposition to House Bill 5040: An Act Establishing a 35% excise tax on ammunition.

I am the Junior Director at The Bell City Rifle Club in Southington, CT. Currently, we have 17 kids involved in our program. On an average night, we have about 13 students attend practice, where each kid fires 40 rounds of ammunition. This year, we will go through about two cases of .22 caliber ammunition. That’s 10,000 rounds. With this 35% tax, we would have to pay nearly $150.00 in taxes just to train. That’s money we could use for awards and equipment. Instead, if this bill passes, this money would then be used to fund organizations that wish to end this kind of program.

In my experience working with junior shooters, I have found that they tend to be better behaved than the average child. The qualification program teaches hard work, determination and friendly competition, and at an affordable price to them. They take responsibility, safety and respect to a different level, knowing that failure to follow the rules could be dangerous to themselves and others. In short, they have earned the right and privilege to be junior shooters and stand to lose that simply due to a tax. Few extracurricular programs are available to students presently; sports programs are being cut from many school systems, other activities are made impossible for families due to their high costs and fees. We have an affordable solution, and a meaningful one that we stand to lose if this bill passes.

Our program has produced regional and national record holders, regional and national champions, as well as world champions. Many of our past juniors have gone on to shoot for military teams and received scholarships to compete for college teams. One athlete even tried out for the Olympics. None of these accomplishments would have been possible without practice. This tax would make it difficult for many to practice as much as necessary to achieve their goals.

Once again, I oppose House Bill 5040.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony.

Respectfully submitted,

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