TO: Chairs Fonfara and Rojas
   Ranking Members Witkos and Davis
   Joint Committee on Finance, Revenue, and Bonding

FROM: Susan Vogel — Darien, CT
   Connecticut Chapter — Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America

RE: Support for H. B. 5040, An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition

Dear Chairs and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee:

My name is Susan Vogel, and I am a Darien resident and mother of two young adults. I am submitting testimony on behalf of the Connecticut Chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America on House Bill 5040, An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition.

The sole purpose of H.B. 5040 is to generate much-needed revenue to fund organizations actively engaged in gun violence prevention and reduction efforts, especially in Connecticut’s cities. The groups this bill seeks to support, such as Project Longevity, Mothers United Against Violence, StreetSafe, as well as hospital-based violence intervention programs, are chronically underfunded. Yet they are on the front lines of the fight against gun violence and the first line of support and comfort to those whose lives are directly and irrevocably affected by it.

Gun violence costs Connecticut $1.2 billion a year.¹ National estimates suggest that averting a single gun homicide saves our government $464,000.² These costs are conservative at best, as they are incapable of capturing the social and emotional toll gun violence takes on communities and people directly affected by it.

Community-based organizations have a proven track record of success in the fight against gun violence. Project Longevity’s work has contributed to a 53% reduction in Connecticut’s gun homicide rate from 2012 to 2018.³ H.B. 5040 will provide critical financial support for organizations that are working so hard to end gun violence in Connecticut.

These programs work. And they do more than save money. They assist those devastated by gun violence to heal, navigate the aftermath of a shooting or shooting death, and provide the ongoing emotional support needed to get through the next hours, days, months, and years.


Earlier this month, our Connecticut chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, a part of Everytown for Gun Safety, held a panel in honor of survivors of gun violence as part of annual National Gun Violence Survivors Week. One of our panelists, Aquil Crooks, of StreetSafe, had this to share:

“When a mom comes to the scene when her son or daughter has been murdered, I call it the scream of death. Because when they first get there, the first thing they do is scream. Every hair on your body stands up. There is nothing, absolutely nothing that you can do.”

I'm confident we all hope for and are working towards a CT where hospital hallways no longer reverberate with the "screams of death." Where children can live, learn, and play in communities free from the specter of gun violence. Where none of us live with the uncertainty of our safety. In the meantime, we need these tireless, dedicated community-based gun violence prevention organizations working to reduce gun violence in our cities. And we need to provide them with the financial resources necessary to break the cycle of violence and care for the victims and survivors when violence does occur. We need them to help keep our communities safe.

Connecticut is a national leader in gun violence prevention, yet our communities continue to grapple with the toll of daily gun violence. We must challenge ourselves to be creative in finding new ways to fund these programs, including proposals like H.B. 5040, and dedicate these funds to groups committed to stopping violence in our communities.

Thank you.