Members of the committee, my name is John Weber and I am the State Director for Connecticut at the NRA-ILA. I am here today to speak in opposition to H.B. 5040 AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN EXCISE TAX ON AMMUNITION.

Such a measure would discourage law-abiding citizens from practicing regularly with their firearms for purposes such as self-defense, competition, and hunting. It would not hinder criminals who rarely acquire guns or ammunition through legal means. In fact, high, arbitrarily high taxes create black markets, increase criminal activity, and move the sale of otherwise legal products beyond the reach of law enforcement.

The impact of this punitive and regressive tax will be to hurt public safety by taking away the ability for law-abiding citizens to be proficient with their firearms. Selective sales taxes on politically polarizing goods rarely achieve their intended outcome and disproportionately hurt the poor. Law-abiding citizens should not face this tax for the same reasons law enforcement is being exempted.

This bill would also discourage recreational shooting by law-abiding citizens and make Connecticut retailers uncompetitive against retailers outside of the state. Competitive and recreational shooters will face the heaviest burden under this tax and it will certainly limit their ability to train and compete in sanctioned contest.

It would not hinder criminals, who steal ammunition or acquire it in small quantities on the black market and who would not have Connecticut ammunition certificates to lawfully purchase ammunition and be subject to this tax. Connecticut is a relatively small state, anyone who wishes to circumvent this law can easily cross state lines to purchase ammunition which would only hurt businesses is Connecticut.

For all these reasons the NRA-ILA opposes H.B. 5040.