Connecticut Finance, Revenue, and Bonding Committee

Dear Committee Members,

I am a 67 year old retired engineer, with an advanced degree in engineering, a US Navy veteran, and a lifelong outdoors enthusiast. I am a law abiding, ethical, and contributing citizen, and after having worked my entire life, in my retirement I am finally able to enjoy the fruits of a lifetime of labor. I rely on Social Security and private annuity for income, which allows me to live a modest but satisfying lifestyle, as I did when I was working.

It is my understanding there is currently a proposal, House Bill 5040, to levy a 35% tax on the sale of firearms ammunition. I must say that the imposition of such a punitive measure would severely constrain or eliminate my participation my favorite sports - the very popular, legal, and legitimate sports of skeet and trap shooting.

It should be obvious that target shooters purchase exponentially more ammunition than any other shooters - and thus would certainly be disproportionally penalized by an additional ammunition tax. Being retired and on a fixed income, the impact of such a punitive tax would be to price this sport beyond my reach.

I shoot skeet and trap, both of which are Olympic sports, at a local club. Each game (round) of skeet or trap fires 25 shotgun shells, and I typical shoot 2 or three rounds each outing, several times a week. That's about 900 shells per month, and actually not a lot for any shooting sports enthusiast. The ammunition I purchase represents the most significant portion of the costs of my leisure activities.

Purchasers of shooting and fishing equipment & supplies already pay an 11% federal “Pittman-Robertson” excise tax, as well as a 6.375% state sales tax. Increasing the taxes on legitimate sporting goods will do absolutely nothing to prevent violent crime, and will unfairly penalize those who participate in legitimate sports.

Please understand that the equipment used in this sport is certainly not a contributor to firearms violence - those who parrot the misguided mantra that "all guns are made to kill", are openly displaying their ignorance. Target guns and ammunition are made specifically for target shooting, with unique characteristics for their intended purpose, and are generally unsuitable for any other purpose. It is extremely rare for target guns or ammunition to be used in criminal offenses. Further, recreational shooting clubs promote and insist on strict safety practices and responsible gun ownership in every respect.

It is further noteworthy that target shooting sports are passive sports, not involving any form of physical aggression such as that found in most competitive sports - football, basketball, hockey, etc. They foster ethics, camaraderie, and fellowship, and most shooting clubs regularly perform a myriad of community services.

The proponents of this bill need to be familiar with sporting arms and their use, and fully understand the ramifications of such a bill, before they act

I implore you to help defeat this bill, and instead support meaningful efforts to address the issue of violent crime and illegal firearms possession through rigorous and aggressive enforcement of existing
laws and meaningful and effective penalties for armed criminals.

Sincerely,
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