



California Rifle and Pistol Association, Inc.

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April 21, 2005

Senator Joseph Dunn
State Capitol, rm 2080
Sacramento, Calif 95814

Dear Senator Dunn:

Re: SB 357, Ammunition: serialized handgun
ammunition

Position: Opposed

This is to inform you that the California Rifle and Pistol Association is opposed to SB 357. The Department of Justice theorizes that such serialization would allow law enforcement to apprehend persons who use handguns illegally through the matching of serial numbers on spent ammunition components found at crime scenes to a department maintained registration list of ammunition buyers. However, the reality of this theory is that it is wishful thinking, at best, to believe that such a scheme could actually work in the world of real life application. There are simply too many unconsidered and uncontrollable variables that would make it impractical as a tool for purposes of criminal identification. The issue of survivability of a serial number on bullets and casings is only a small part of the total picture, and is not a factor in CRPA's opposition to this bill.

Some of the real life variables apparently not considered by the department include the fact that ammunition often changes hands, in some cases several times, before it is fired. There is no reliable way to track a single round of ammunition from the point of manufacture to the end user. Ammunition is frequently lawfully transferred to another person at such places as estate sales, garage sales, sportsmen's swap meets, sportsmen's fund raising events, etc. It is given as gifts, is loaned, and is also stolen during the course of a burglary. There are many other ways serialized ammunition could lawfully and unlawfully change hands, as well.

Criminal street gang members and other perpetrators of crimes are often under the legal age for buying handguns and ammunition. Yet, they have no trouble getting both from sources other than the retailers who would be the only suppliers of registration information upon which the proposed legislation would depend. It would not take long before criminals of all kinds learned not to buy ammunition from retailers. They can easily obtain ammunition from out of state sources, by theft, in the underground marketplace in California, etc. They have historically done so. There are many non-traceable sources from which criminals can procure ammunition. They do not need to buy

serialized ammunition from a retailer, and they will not do so. SB 357 depends upon the cooperation of criminals who are expected to make their ammunition acquisitions from retailers and register themselves as ammunition buyers. This will not happen!

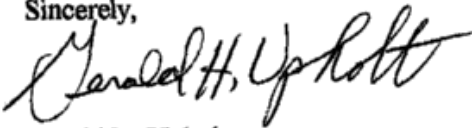
If enacted, the proposed legislation would quickly become just another poorly thought out law that in reality, once again, only affects lawful citizens who are not a part of the firearms related crime problem. Criminals would easily find a way around it, just as they do other laws. Those who support this proposal clearly have not considered the total atmosphere in which such legislation must operate. If they had done so, they would not propose it without also addressing the myriad of other issues that must be resolved before any such scheme could possibly hope to be workable.

For example, the ammunition manufacturers, in their letter dated December 16, 2004, pointed out several valid problems such as the safety hazards of introducing a laser into a work environment where gun powder and priming compound are also present. Notwithstanding the practical engineering problems associated with safely and mechanically doing so, this requirement alone could cause a dramatic rise in insurance and workers compensation costs for the affected employers. It could even affect their viability as American businesses who employ thousands of workers. If they cannot successfully operate under the conditions that this proposal would impose, who will supply American law enforcement and the military with ammunition? Will this become yet another industry and jobs that are out-sourced to a foreign country where there are fewer burdensome government imposed impediments to manufacturing and where there are lower operating costs? Or, will the ammunition manufacturers, most of whom are located outside of California, simply solve the manufacturing and safety problems this proposed legislation would create by choosing to abandon the state as a market for their products? These two options are among the many potential disastrous results if SB 357 is enacted!

In conclusion, this proposal is one of those ideas that may sound good in concept to someone who has not considered all of the relevant factors and issues that are involved. However, an in-depth examination of the details will show that it is not workable and that it would cause more problems than it purportedly would solve.

For the above reasons, the California Rifle and Pistol Association is opposed to SB357.

Sincerely,



Gerald H. Upholt
Manager of Governmental Affairs

cc: The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor of California
Senate Committee on Public Safety