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**Testimony Supporting  
House Bill HB 5040, An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition**

**Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee  
February 27, 2019**

Senator Fonfara, Representative Rojas, Senator Witkos, Representative Davis and distinguished members of the Finance, Revenue and Bonding Committee, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **House Bill HB 5040, An Act Establishing an Excise Tax on Ammunition.**

**The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region.** Made possible by the gifts of generous individuals, families and organizations, the Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$796 million since its founding in 1925.

Our new strategic plan includes a focus on increased community safety and resilience in Hartford. Since 2013, the City of Hartford has experienced more than 780 shootings. We know that violent crime is highest in Hartford's Promise Zone neighborhoods and Frog Hollow. Black and Latinx children and their families living in the North and South End neighborhoods are disproportionately impacted. We know that exposure to gun violence affects physical and mental well-being. It can also affect youth in the classroom, making it difficult for them to concentrate in class and harming their school performance and educational or career aspirations. To prosper as a state, Connecticut cannot allow its greatest resources – our children and youth – to continue to suffer the consequences of violence. We must act differently and now.

**We support House Bill 5040 for its thoughtful approach to raising much needed funding to support neighborhood-based gun violence prevention and reduction services in the communities most impacted by this devastating cycle of violence.**

The Foundation is taking a more hands-on approach to our community safety efforts. We are working with grassroots organizations, listening to residents, and supporting efforts to increase community safety and resilience in Hartford's neighborhoods. A number of the community-based organizations that we support have been providing a variety of response efforts to prevent further violence and to save lives.

In 2018, we awarded \$160,000 to a group of neighborhood-based nonprofit agencies to form the Hartford Community Safety Coalition as an organic response to the rising incidence of gun violence in Hartford. With the mission to create healthy communities through a reduction of violence and trauma, the coalition collectively provides real-time crisis response, victim support and counseling, youth intervention, violence interruption, and community organizing.

Our staff is also exploring strategies that seek to improve community and law enforcement relations, provide hospital-based violence intervention and prevention, implement focused school-based violence prevention, as part of our larger strategy of building and enhancing community and resident resilience. But philanthropy cannot and should not fund this work alone. Effective,

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sustainable and measurable prevention efforts requires public commitment, public policy and public dollars.

It is time to prioritize prevention and the well-being of Connecticut's communities, families and children and H.B. 5040 sets us on that path.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at [policy@hfp.org](mailto:policy@hfp.org) or 860-548-1888.