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## **Ammunition Coding Talk Sparks Opposition**

JEFFERSON CITY — Several constituents have notified my office recently to voice their opposition to proposed legislation sponsored by Sen. Joan Bray, D-St. Louis, which would mandate the encoding of ammunition. Let me assure you: I oppose the measure and will relay those sentiments loudly and clearly to my Senate colleagues.

The legislation seeks to create an ammunition coding system database that contains information provided by manufacturers and vendors of firearm ammunition that would trace gun ownership. Information would be provided to law enforcement agencies for use in criminal investigations. Encoding ammunition requires ammunition manufacturers to engrave a serial number on the base of the bullet projectile. The assertion is that labeling bullets makes them a more useable piece of evidence. The money for maintaining the database would come from firearm ammunition vendors assessing an additional one-half cent per bullet or round of ammunition. The proposed measure also includes penalties for selling or possessing non-encoded ammunition.

I'm not sure if I can tell you in this short amount of space all of the things I see wrong with this. First of all, I believe in our citizens' rights to keep and bear arms, as assured by the Second Amendment, and don't want any interference with that freedom. The National Rifle Association reports that encoded ammunition generally means the forfeiture of currently-owned ammunition, a separate registration for every box of new ammunition, and outrageously expensive ammunition costs for both police and private citizens. Under this kind of system, it appears reloading (re-using cartridge cases multiple times) would be abolished.

American manufacturers produce 8 billion rounds each year and gun owners possess hundreds of millions of rounds for target shooting, hunting and personal protection. This legislation seems not only ill-conceived, but impossible to do.

Similar legislation has been introduced in other states, including Washington, Arizona, New York, Illinois and Hawaii. I read a story this week that mentioned none of those state's bill sponsors, however, have mentioned there is only one company in the country with the technology to carry out this encoding, and that company has been working with a consulting firm that offers to help lawmakers draft the legislation.

I say "NO" to this proposed legislation, and I pledge to do all I can to see that it is halted in its tracks, as it doesn't reflect the majority's opinion in this state in the unobstructed rights of gun owners.

While seeking to solve crime with the latest technologies available is admirable, we want to make sure we go after the criminals who are already breaking current gun laws and not put restrictions on our law-abiding gun owners.

If you have comments or questions about this week's column or any other matter involving state government, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can reach my office by phone at (866) 271-2844.

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