

# BULLET SERIALIZATION

## BULLET SERIALIZATION IN GENERAL

- Bullet Serialization is the process by which each individual round of ammunition is identified and marked with a laser engraved serial number.

## CONCERNS ABOUT BULLET SERIALIZATION

- Bullet serialization is a de facto ban on ammunition.
- Manufacturers of ammunition cannot serialize ammo as it would force a slowdown in the production process -- the likes of which would turn one day's worth of production into a nearly four-week effort.
- This massive reduction in ammunition would translate into substantially lower sales and profitability and ultimately force major ammunition manufacturers to abandon the market. In turn, there would be a severe shortage of serialized ammunition and all consumers, including federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, would be faced with substantial price increases.
- Ammunition will go from costing pennies to several dollars per cartridge.
- Ammunition manufacturers could not serialize their product without hundreds of millions of dollars in capital investment to build the new factories that would be needed in order to meet the requirements of bullet serialization. At the same time hundreds of millions of dollars of existing plants and equipment, and decades of manufacturing (cost-saving) efficiencies, would be rendered obsolete.

## BULLET SERIALIZATION AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

- Reducing the availability and affordability of training ammunition would result in degrading marksmanship.
- The technical evolution of law enforcement pistol ammunition has progressed exponentially over the past 15 years. For example, SAAMI-member ammunition producers developed bullet-bonding technology to provide law enforcement with products that offer enhanced performance through barriers such as auto glass, steel, and wallboard. Law enforcement would be forced to use lesser quality ammunition, putting officers at risk.
- As manufacturers use the same machines and

manufacturing processes to make all ammunition, whether it is for the civilian, law enforcement or military markets, it would be impossible, as some contend, to merely exempt law-enforcement.

- Bullet serialization legislation failed in California after numerous law-enforcement groups, including the California Police Chiefs' Association, the California Peace Officers' Association, the Association of Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs and the Los Angeles Police Protective League urged lawmakers to vote it down.
- James J. Fotis, Executive Director of the Law Enforcement Alliance of America, went so far as to say, "If passed, this legislation will certainly play out like a horror flick on public safety and law enforcement in California."

## BULLET SERIALIZATION AND THE MILITARY

- Former Congressman Duncan Hunter, then Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, expressed such concerns in his April 25, 2005 letter to then-Governor Schwarzenegger describing bullet serialization as "troubling." The congressman wrote, ". . . I am strongly opposed to this proposal because of the harmful impact it will have on the manufacturers of ammunition used by our nation's armed services and law enforcement agencies."

## THE SCIENCE BEHIND BULLET SERIALIZATION

- There have been no independent, peer-reviewed studies by qualified forensic scientists.
- The technology has not been the subject of any articles in the journal of the Association of Firearm and Toolmark Examiners (AFTE), the relevant professional society.
- No independent studies have been done to determine the safety implications of using high speed laser engravers in the presence of the ammunition components, i.e. primers, propellants, etc. For instance, flash photography is not permitted inside factories because of gunpowder ignition concerns.
- Most bullets (especially hunting cartridges) are mangled beyond recognition on impact, which, in most cases, would obliterate the "serial number."

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## THREATS OF BULLET SERIALIZATION

- The California legislature has attempted numerous times to give the state’s Attorney General the power to mandate bullet serialization of all ammunition including shotgun shells. While the firearm industry was able to thwart this dangerous legislation from passing, future attempts to require bullet serialization are a certainty, in California and elsewhere.
- A lobbying campaign is underway to pass legislation at the state level mandating bullet serialization. The Ravensforge Company, a skateboarding equipment corporation with strong financial ties to bullet serialization technology has led the charge in the past.
- Anti-gun legislators in the Illinois General Assembly have proposed legislation that would mandate bullet serialization. If passed into law, a company started by Ravensforge Company founders, called AMMO Coding Systems, stands to profit, as it owns the proprietary technology mandated by the legislation. The company is lobbying heavily for the legislation. The legislation would also force law-abiding citizens and retailers to dispose of any ammunition they currently hold that is not serialized.

## LEGISLATIVE FEEDBACK

- Reactions of Legislators in Arizona  
**“I realize that signing onto this bill was a mistake.”**  
Representative Manuel V. “Manny” Alvarez District #25 correspondence to a constituent regarding his initial support of bullet serialization
- Former Hawaii Attorney General and current United States Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, Mark

J. Bennett, opposes Bullet Serialization: **“Unduly burdensome”**

- Reactions of Legislators in Maryland  
Testifying at a 2008 House Judiciary Committee meeting, Ford, of Seattle, said he has a patent for ammunition-encoding technology.

Opponents, including committee members, took turns tearing into Ford’s plan, calling it unwieldy and oppressive. Thirty-five people signed up to testify against the bill.

Referring to Ford’s patent, former Del. Michael D. Smigiel Sr., R-Caroline/Cecil/Kent/Queen Anne’s, said, “I hope that you never make a dime, sir.”

Former Del. Christopher B. Shank, R-Washington, said the state already has a ballistic “fingerprint” system that doesn’t help solve crimes.

## NSSF VICTORIES

Bullet serialization legislation has been defeated in the following states:

- Arizona
- California
- Connecticut
- Hawaii
- Illinois
- Indiana
- Kentucky
- Maryland
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- New York
- Pennsylvania
- Rhode Island
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Washington

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