



LEROY D. BACA, SHERIFF

County of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department Headquarters
4700 Ramona Boulevard
Monterey Park, California 91754-2169



March 14, 2008

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
United States House of Representatives
1119 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Becerra:

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES BILL 5266 - SUPPORT
AS INTRODUCED ON FEBRUARY 7, 2008
NATIONAL CRIME GUN IDENTIFICATION ACT OF 2008
FIREARM MICROSTAMPING**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department is proud to support your House of Representatives Bill HR 5266. This bill, commencing January 1, 2010, would require that all new semiautomatic pistols sold in the United States be equipped with microstamping identifiers. When a gun is fired, internal surfaces of the gun etch tiny characters on every spent cartridge case identifying the make, model, and serial number of the gun. The microstamping technology will help law enforcement link cartridge casings to crime guns.

Under existing federal law, there is no requirement for a firearm to imprint any information on a cartridge case which would link the cartridge to the firearm.

In 2007, California State Assemblymember Mike Feuer introduced Assembly Bill 1471, which I strongly supported. This bill required microstamping after January 1, 2010, for all new semiautomatic pistols in California. The bill made it through both the State Assembly and Senate, and on October 13, 2007, California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed Assembly Bill 1471 into law.

A Tradition of Service

In 2006, in California (Federal Bureau of Investigations Statistics, 2006), there were 2,485 murders. Of that number, 1,822 were committed with firearms, which 1,623 were handguns. These horrific numbers reflect that 65 percent of the gun-related homicides in California in 2006 were perpetrated by suspects using handguns. Additionally, 70 percent of new handguns sold in California are semiautomatic pistols.

Between 2005 and 2006, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department handled 668 murders involving firearms, which accounted for more than 80 percent of the total homicides investigated by the Department. In many of these cases, the only evidence left at the scene were expended cartridge casings. Usually, the only information or "lead" obtained from a cartridge casing is the type of bullet that was used. Currently, to link a cartridge casing to a gun, it is necessary to have the gun in order to conduct the comparison.

If federal law required all semiautomatic pistols to be equipped with a microstamping feature, the ability of all investigators across this nation to solve heinous assaults and murders committed with semiautomatic firearms, where the only evidence left is a cartridge casing, would increase dramatically. This would provide some direction to the investigation and increase the probability of finding the perpetrator.

I applaud you for authoring this important legislation which will assist law enforcement nationwide in solving these terrible crimes. I also commend you for your strong commitment to improving public safety in our great nation. Should you need further assistance on this issue, or have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me directly, at (323) 526-5000, or my Legislative Advocate, Sergeant Wayne Bilowit, at (323) 240-5696.

Sincerely,



LEROY D. BACA
SHERIFF