

CAPITOL OFFICE
1119 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-6235
FAX: (202) 225-2202



COMMITTEE ON WAYS AND MEANS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SOCIAL SECURITY

DISTRICT OFFICE
1910 SUNSET BOULEVARD, #560
LOS ANGELES, CA 90026
PHONE: (213) 483-1425
FAX: (213) 483-1429

BECERRA.HOUSE.GOV

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

XAVIER BECERRA
31ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON THE BUDGET

ASSISTANT TO THE
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

April 9, 2008

Dear Colleague:

I invite you to cosponsor the National Crime Gun Identification Act (H.R. 5266), which would make it easier for police to trace guns used in crimes by requiring all new semiautomatic handguns sold in the country starting in 2010 to incorporate microstamping technology in two parts of guns. Senator Edward Kennedy has introduced this same sensible legislation (S. 2605) to improve safety in America.

One year ago, 32 students and faculty members were killed at Virginia Tech University, which disturbingly and coincidentally the same number of Americans who lose their lives to gun violence each day. As we reflect on such a tragic day, it is Congress' responsibility to implement measures that improve our residents' safety. Microstamping, proposed in H.R. 5266, is a common-sense, effective, and inexpensive technology that will help their investigations without hindering the rights of law-abiding gun owners. By implementing microstamping, internal surfaces of new guns would redundantly etch tiny characters on every fired cartridge so officers could quickly identify the make, model, and serial number of the gun it came from. A single microstamped cartridge recovered at a crime scene can lead police quickly and directly to the gun that fired it.

Across the nation, local law enforcement and elected officials stand in support of microstamping. During a press conference I held in Los Angeles this past district work period, the mayors of Los Angeles and Chicago, the Los Angeles City Council, and the Los Angeles Police Chief and Sheriff announced their support for H.R. 5266. The bill is endorsed by leaders all across the country, including mayors from New York, Boston, Seattle and the U.S. Conference of Mayors. The New York Times has also published an editorial in support of the bill.

Microstamping is effective and durable. A 2007 study found that even after a microstamp-equipped gun fired 2,500 rounds, all eight digits of the firing pin and breech face markings were still identifiable. H.R. 5266 does not create a new database or gun registry. Microstamping stands on the existing process by which investigators work with the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Fire Department, utilizing gun serial numbers, to identify the first purchaser of a crime gun. This bill simply speeds up the pace and efficiency of investigations because law enforcement could more quickly and precisely magnify cartridge markings to extract the serial number directly from expended cartridges. Investigators could then more quickly engage in determining where the crime gun came from.

I urge you to cosponsor this important legislation that gives police officers the tools they need to investigate, arrest, and prosecute criminals. To learn more about this important technology, I encourage you to visit my website, www.becerra.house.gov, where you'll find bill information, reports on microstamping technology, letters of support, news articles, a video of the Los Angeles press conference, and C-span's coverage of a demonstration and briefing I held on Capitol Hill. To cosponsor H.R. 5266, please contact Melody Gonzales in my office at 202-226-3749 or melody.gonzales@mail.house.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Xavier Becerra". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Xavier" being more prominent.

Rep. Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress