

October 30, 2007



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United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
Woman's National Democratic Club  
Women's League for Conservative Judaism  
YWCA of the U.S.A.

The Honorable Edward M. Kennedy  
United States Senate  
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Kennedy:

I write to express the strong support of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence for the National Crime Gun Identification Act of 2007. By requiring all new semiautomatic handguns sold in the United States to be microstamped with a code representing the gun's serial number, this legislation will give law enforcement across the country an important new crime-fighting tool.

Microstamping technology utilizes lasers to make microscopic engravings on the breech face and firing pin of a gun. As the gun is fired, a code is stamped onto the cartridge. This technology promises to enhance law enforcement's ability to rapidly identify and link shell casings found at a crime scene to the individual semiautomatic handgun from which they were fired, and to the gun's first point of purchase. Evidence suggests that microstamping could result in thousands of additional successful gun traces every year.

The technology offers a number of important advantages over the current ballistics imaging system. It is cheaper and more precise, and it also identifies the gun associated with a shell casing even if police have not recovered the crime gun itself. No new computer system or database is needed, and no taxpayer money would be required to implement microstamping. Additionally, microstamping would not require the submission or compilation of any additional personal information about American gun purchasers.

Your legislation would also help reduce trafficking of new semiautomatic handguns by creating a chain of accountability. Individuals, known as "straw" buyers, who purchase guns for convicted felons or other prohibited persons, would be more likely to be identified and prosecuted since microstamping would result in more guns being successfully traced. We believe this would act as a significant deterrent for such criminal behavior.

Microstamping is tamper resistant and criminals would find it extremely difficult to defeat the technology. Its redundant markings—on the firing pin and breech face of the gun—are durable, and routine maintenance and servicing of a firearm will not affect microstamped characters and codes.

Historic microstamping legislation was recently signed into law in California by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger. That bill garnered the endorsement of 65 police chiefs and sheriffs across the state, in addition to the Peace Officers

Research Association of California (PORAC), the largest state-wide Public Safety Association in the country. It is clear that law enforcement officials are excited about this revolutionary new technology.

Nearly 30,000 Americans are killed each year as a result of gun violence, and we desperately need new, effective tools to curb gun crime. The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence believes the National Crime Gun Identification Act of 2007 will assist greatly in this regard, and we wholeheartedly support the bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Horwitz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Josh Horwitz  
Executive Director