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BI-PARTISAN LEGISLATURE OPPOSES ANTI-GUN BILL HOURS AHEAD OF VOTE NIAGARA COUNTY ON RECORD AGAINST 'MICROSTAMPING'

LOCKPORT—In Niagara County, county lawmakers see very little ambiguity in the words of the Second Amendment. And that's a view that crosses party lines.

Bi-partisan support for the U.S. Constitution was on display Tuesday night when county lawmakers rushed a resolution to the floor to oppose an anti-sportsman, anti-Second Amendment bill gaining traction among New York state Assembly leadership.

The bill, A.1157B, would impose costly and unproven "microstamping" technology on every gun sold in New York state. Sponsored by Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel, D-Long Island, the bill has been introduced numerous times only to be defeated in one or both houses of the state Legislature repeatedly. However, Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, D-Manhattan, is poised to bring it to the floor this week for a vote.

And that had county legislators in both the Republican-led Majority Caucus and the Democratic Minority Caucus linking arms in a show of force against anti-gun Downstate liberals.

"Microstamping is little more than a back-door to gun-control," explained Legislator John Syracuse, R-Newfane, one of the lead sponsors of the county resolution opposing the microstamping bill. "It would radically increase the cost of firearms for law-abiding citizens, by requiring technology that may not even work. And it's technology that's easily defeated by criminals—firing pins can be replaced or switched. Ultimately, all microstamping does is increase the costs to our law-abiding citizens—and making guns too expensive for law-abiding citizens is an attack on their right to keep and bear arms."

Syracuse was opposing the bill in tandem with Legislator Michael A. Hill, R-Middleport. The duo have brought several resolutions opposing various extreme gun control bills, most recently putting the county on the record against an effort by Schimel to include the microstamping bill as a "rider" in the state budget earlier this spring.

This time, however, Syracuse and Hill had an ally from across the aisle in the form of Minority Leader Dennis Virtuoso, D-Niagara Falls. As Schimel's microstamping bill only began gaining traction after the deadline for submitting resolutions under normal rules of the Legislature, the pair needed the support of the County Legislature's Minority Caucus to introduce the last-minute resolution—which Virtuoso provided.

"We're glad we had the support of our colleagues in the Minority Caucus," Syracuse said. "One of the truly great things about the Niagara County Legislature is that our support for sportsmen and the Second Amendment really is bi-partisan—and usually unanimous."

Syracuse said his opposition to Schimel's bill—which has been repeatedly introduced in the Assembly in various forms, particularly over the past four years—came not only from his staunch support for the

Second Amendment, but also a certain distaste for Schimel's efforts to ram through unpopular legislation that would adversely impact state residents far removed from Schimel's Long Island district.

"Ms. Schimel has 20 times introduced legislation to require microstamping be included in every gun sold in New York State," Syracuse said. "Twenty times, it has been either defeated outright or died in committee. And yet, she remains undaunted, and now is trying to, in the last days of the Assembly's current session, to ram this measure through."

Hill, who as a law-enforcement officer is quite knowledgeable about firearms, noted last year during a previous effort to pass an identical bill in the Assembly, that Schimel's proposed law requires creation of a statewide database of unique bullet IDs, but fails to explain how construction, updating, and maintenance of such a costly database would be paid for.

"I know that databases cost money to create. Databases cost money to maintain," Hill said. "The Assembly doesn't say where that money is going to come from."

Hill summed up the County Legislature's opposition to the Assembly micro-stamping bill on behalf of his colleagues. "There are just a lot of holes in it," Hill said. "The Assembly leadership is talking about adding an expense to law-enforcement for a technology that's not proven, and that can be scrubbed right out of a handgun. And I just think it's another attack on our Second Amendment rights."

Syracuse said he has a lot of doubts about the as-yet-unproven microstamping technology, based on how easily firing pins could be filed down or swapped with other, similar guns, and was characteristically blunt in his assessment:

"Let's not subjugate our Constitutional freedoms to imperfect technology," he said.

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