

June 24, 2025

Ohio Senate Armed Services, Veterans Affairs and Public Safety Committee

Honorable Members of the Committee –

I write today on behalf of the members of the National Shooting Sports Foundation, Inc., the firearm industry trade association. Our industry provides products necessary for Ohioans to exercise your Second Amendment rights. **I write today to urge you to support Senate Bill 214.**

The National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF) **strongly supports the right of law-abiding Ohioans to purchase and possess suppressors in accordance with federal law.** We are providing testimony today to ensure that our members – suppressor manufacturers at the cutting edge of hearing protection technology, highly regulated distributors, and federally licensed firearm dealers in your communities – can continue making and selling these extremely popular firearm accessories.

As the sponsor of the bill has previously explained, suppressors simply muffle the report of a firearm without silencing it. I am attaching a fact sheet to my testimony covering some of the benefits of using suppressors and would encourage you to review that information to answer any lingering questions you may have on that front.

This very day, firearm suppressors are [legal to own in 42 states](#) and 41 states allow them to be used for hunting purposes. Hollywood has portrayed these car-mufflers-for-firearms in a way that has left many Americans confused about what they can and cannot do to the sound – called the “report” – after a gun is fired.

The expansive “Big, Beautiful Bill” that [passed](#) the U.S. House of Representatives last month included a provision to make it less duplicative for law-abiding Americans to legally purchase a firearm suppressor. As you know, the U.S. Senate is now considering the bill.

Let me first dispel a myth being propagated by anti-Second Amendment groups: Background checks on firearm suppressors will not go away with the passage of any language actively being considered in Congress. In fact, the exact opposite is true. Under the House-passed version of the bill, if a law-abiding American wanted to purchase a firearm suppressor, he or she would still be required to submit a signed Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) Form 4473 and be verified as not prohibited through an FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) check. Again, a buyer would still be required to pass an FBI background check, exactly like they must do when purchasing a firearm for which they want their suppressor.

Gun control groups often use scare tactics on suppressors just like they do on firearms hoping Americans won’t be the wiser. But the truth continues to shine brighter. In recent years, Americans have come to recognize the benefits of utilizing a firearm suppressor and have become educated on what they do and don’t do.

According to NSSF’s recent 2025 Suppressor Owner Study, between 2020 and 2024, there was a 265 percent surge in annual suppressor registrations, marking a significant increase in the number of suppressors

being purchased. As of December 31, 2024, there are more than 4.5 million suppressors registered and an estimated 3.14 million suppressors belong to consumers – a number that has only grown in the past six months as application processing times have dramatically gone down.

In addition to the sheer numbers of suppressors owned by law-abiding Americans, NSSF survey data reveals the proficiency level of the buyer varies widely, including 27 percent who self-describe as “new” or “competent” shooters, with 16 percent as “expert” and 57 percent as “proficient.”

The top three reasons given for purchasing firearm suppressors in this span include “recreational shooting” at 39 percent, “hunting” at 30 percent and “home protection” at nine percent. The firearm used with a purchaser’s suppressor breaks down along similar lines, with Modern Sporting Rifles (MSRs) at 37 percent, traditional hunting rifles at 32 percent and handguns at 23 percent.

Additionally, the data shows that as suppressor sales to law-abiding Americans have increased significantly in recent years, crimes involving suppressors have not. In fact, they’re negligible. In a study looking at the criminal misuse of suppressors in California and nation-wide between 1995 and 2005, there were just 153 federal criminal cases involving suppressors, only 15 of which involved the actual use of the suppressor in the commission of a crime. Less than 0.1 percent of homicides in federal court, an infinitesimally low 0.00006 percent of felonies in California and a mere 0.1 percent of armed robberies involved a suppressor. Suppressed firearms are clearly not the choice for criminals.

Again, only law-abiding Americans who pass an FBI NICS background check will be able to obtain suppressors if the budget reconciliation bill passes the U.S. Senate with the suppressor provision included and is signed into law by President Donald Trump.

While it is impossible for any of us to predict what Congress will do tomorrow, let alone in the days and weeks to come, I respectfully ask that you continue moving Senate Bill 214 forward so Ohio is prepared to address any gap left by Congress that would prevent law abiding men and women across Ohio from purchasing or possessing a suppressor simply because of an unusual – and unintentional – conflict between state statute and what could very well become federal law.

Sincerely,

Moriah Day

Director, Government Relations – State Affairs

National Shooting Sports Foundation

The Firearm Industry Trade Association

BENEFITS OF USING SUPPRESSORS FOR HUNTING AND SHOOTING SPORTS

INTRODUCTION

Firearm sound suppressors, or “silencers” as they are sometimes called, are devices which help reduce the noise of gunfire to hearing safe levels when attached to the end of a firearm’s barrel. Suppressors are generally nothing more than containment systems with a series of baffles which help contain and re-direct the expanding gasses that exit the end of the firearm’s barrel when it is discharged. They are very similar to car mufflers which were, in fact, developed in parallel by the same inventor in the early 1900s.ⁱ Suppressors help to lessen the sound of the muzzle-blast only. Using suppressors can make shooting firearms safer, more enjoyable and help make shooting ranges more neighborly.

SAFETY EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Firearm suppressors have many practical benefits for civilians. One of the “ten commandments” of firearm safety is for shooters to wear eye and ear protection.ⁱⁱ A suppressor solves the need for ear protection for shooters who would normally be affected by the noise of the gun shot. This makes for more effective firearms training. Without ear plugs, all shooters will be able to communicate without shouting at each other and hear and comply with instructions and range safety commands easier.

One of the most common problems for shooters is poor accuracy due to the shooter’s anticipation of the gun’s loud report and recoil. This anticipation causes shooters to “flinch” before the gun even goes off, to experience slight tremors in the hand from nervousness, and even to close their



eyes or blink right before they pull the trigger. All of these issues cause the gun to move from the intended target area. The use of suppressors will dramatically increase accuracy because of the reduced muzzle report, reduced recoil, and decreased muzzle flip.

HEARING LOSS

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), any exposure over 140db causes immediate and irreparable hearing loss.ⁱⁱⁱ Men and women in law enforcement and the military are all too familiar with the threats posed by noise-induced hearing loss. In fiscal year 2023, tinnitus and hearing loss were the top disabilities claimed by veterans.^{iv}

Unsuppressed handguns and rifles generally create a muzzle report well above the 140 db threshold.

While the dangers of exposure to the sound of gunfire is indisputable, a suppressor can protect against hearing loss. In one study, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that, “The only potentially effective

noise control method to reduce students’ or instructors’ noise exposure from gunfire is through the use of noise suppressors that can be attached to the end of the gun barrel.”^v Adding to the importance of suppressors, the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck surgery “endorsed the use of firearm suppressor as an effective method of reducing the risk of hearing loss, especially when used in conjunction with conventional hearing protective measures”.^{vi}

HELPING MAKE RANGES BETTER NEIGHBORS

Suppressors in America became highly regulated in 1934 with the passing of the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA).^{vii} Prior to this, suppressors were available by catalog mail order directly to a customer’s home. Now, in order to own one you must complete an extensive application, pay an ownership transfer tax and undergo a background check. In England

and many other European countries, generally known for having much more restrictive firearms laws, they do not have restrictions on suppressor ownership and, in fact, actually encourage their use.^{viii} They recognize that suppressors are a great tool to help reduce noise pollution. Hiram Maxim, the inventor of the modern firearm suppressor, would likely agree. He invented the suppressor in 1902 to solve the noise pollution complaints of his neighbors. In Maxim's book, *Experiences with the Maxim Silencer*, he explains that he developed the suppressor to, "meet my personal desire to enjoy target practice without creating a disturbance. I have always loved to shoot, but I never thoroughly enjoyed it when I knew the noise was annoying other people." Sound familiar? Over 100 years after his invention, noise pollution is still a problem. Shooting ranges throughout America are increasingly being sued by neighbors or are being shut down due to noise complaints.

HUNTING

Suppressors are also useful for hunting where it is not practical to wear ear plugs all day in anticipation of shooting. Suppressors are currently legal to use and possess in 42 states and 40 states have approved suppressor use for hunting. A recent study by NSSF highlighted the growing popularity

of suppressor in hunting. It was found that hunting was the second most primary reason for purchasing a silencer, surpassed only by recreational shooting^{ix}. There are several benefits to hunting with suppressed firearms. Because listening to your surroundings is an important strategy in tracking prey, hunters very rarely if ever use hearing protection. Again, unsuppressed gunfire is loud enough to cause permanent hearing loss. Using a silencer will suppress the gunfire enough to protect your hearing without the use of hearing protection, thus allowing you to effectively track your prey and quickly take your shot without having to first apply hearing protection.

If you have a silencer attached to your muzzle while hunting, there are benefits other than hearing protection. Because the silencer reduces recoil and muzzle rise, you are able to get into position for a follow-up shot more quickly because there is a lot less movement and your cross hairs stay closer to the target. Sometimes, it is possible to get your cross hairs back on target before the first bullet strikes. This quick strategy also allows you to "call" your hits or misses and make quick corrections in the field.

LAWFUL USE OF SUPPRESSORS DOES NOT INCREASE CRIME

There are concerns by some that suppressors will be used in crimes.

These concerns are unfounded, however, as suppressors, which have been legal to own by law-abiding citizens since their inception in 1902, are very rarely used in crimes. In a study looking at the criminal use of suppressors^x in California and nationwide between 1995 and 2005, the researcher found 153 federal criminal cases involving suppressors, only 15 of which involved the actual use of the suppressor in the commission of a crime. Less than 0.1% of homicides in federal court, an infinitesimally low 0.00006% of felonies in California and a mere 0.1% of armed robberies involve a suppressor. Suppressed firearms are clearly not the choice for criminals. This is likely due to the fact that they do not silence firearms like in the movies, they are ineffective on revolvers, they prevent the proper function of most semi-automatic handguns without the addition of a special piston system and they make firearms longer and heavier, which makes them more difficult to conceal.

Suppressor use, especially in Europe, has a long history with many benefits. The fears and concerns about suppressor ownership and use are unfounded and have not been seen in the over 100-year history of suppressors. NSSF supports efforts to remove restrictions on the use of suppressors for hunting and to permit their use at shooting ranges.

ⁱ Maxim, Hiram Percy. Firearm Silencer. U.S. Patent 1482805 A filed Feb 21, 1921 and issued Feb 5, 1924.

ⁱⁱ See: Firearms Safety - 10 Rules of Safe Gun Handling, <http://www.nssf.org/safety/basics/>

ⁱⁱⁱ NIOSH. 1998. Criteria for a Recommended Standard. Occupational Noise Exposure: Revised Criteria 1998. DHHS (NIOSH) Pub. No. 98-126. Cincinnati, OH: NIOSH.

^{iv} <https://www.benefits.va.gov/REPORTS/abr/docs/2023-compensation.pdf>

^v Chen, Lilia and Scott E. Brueck, "Noise and Lead Exposures at an Outdoor Firing Range - California," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, September 2011. p. 5 <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nhe/reports/pdfs/2011-0069-3140.pdf>

^{vi} <https://www.entnet.org/resource/suppressors-for-hearing-preservation/>

^{vii} <https://www.atf.gov/file/58141/download>

^{viii} Halbrook, Stephen, "Firearm Sound Moderators: Issues of Criminalization and the Second Amendment," published in the Cumberland Law Review, Vol. 46, No. 1, 2015-2016. http://stephenhalbrook.com/law_review_articles/firearm_sound_mod.pdf

^{ix} NSSF Suppressor Consumer Study 2025

^x Criminal Use of Firearm Silencers, Paul A. Clark, Western Criminology Review 8(2), 44-57 (2007)