

PRO GUN OPINION/TESTIMONY – CRISTY JONES

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**RE: TESTIMONY/OPINION – PRO GUN CITIZEN – 03/14/13 HEARING ON:
SB 299, SB 505, SB 506, SB 710, SB 897, SB 1071, SB 1076, HB 6162, HB 6251, HB
6595, HB 6598**

My Background Story:

I would like to share a brief personal story to give you some understanding of my perspective regarding the massive gun regulations and restrictions you are considering with these proposed pieces of legislation. Prior to 9/11/01, I was an anti-gun fanatic and would not allow guns in my home since at that time my husband and I had small children. However, on 9/11/01 my delusion that I was safe in my own home, in my own country, was destroyed. Additionally our public “news” medias continue to report in escalating graphic details, terrorist activity, home invasions, murders, and other horrific events that occur every day in our country. So, I now have a CT Gun Carry Permit and I own 2 small handguns. I do not shoot guns for sport. I only go to a gun range once in a while to practice using my guns. I have not yet carried a gun outside of my home. I am a 57-year-old law abiding US Citizen. I keep my guns in a locked safe and the bullets in different locked cabinet. I now feel much safer knowing that if the need arises I do not have to sit by and watch but instead I can do something to protect myself, my family, my home and others if required.

Here’s what I disagree with:

1. There are thousands of guns in CT owned by US Citizens who are protected under the 2nd Amendment of our US Constitution. You are dramatically affecting this constitutional right with some of this legislation – particularly SB 1076.
2. You can mega-legislate, document, tax, control and destroy gun ownership in CT but you cannot get the criminals to turn in their guns OR comply with your registration and tracking requirements.
3. Knowing that for many, many years, thousands of people have owned guns safely and responsibly in CT and one mentally ill person gets hold of guns and does something horrific, who should be held responsible and be punished? The thousands of people who own guns safely OR the person or persons who allowed a mentally ill person to have access to guns – regardless of what type of guns they are?

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4. Discriminating between types of guns and sizes of magazines that you are going to monitor, track, record, require permits on, tax, etc., will not reduce the amount of gun crime in CT. In fact it may give the criminals the edge since they certainly do not discriminate between types of guns or magazine sizes they utilize when they commit a crime!

Here's what you should be addressing:

1. The Gun Carry Permit Course is Extremely Inadequate: The 4 hour NRA course that is required to get a CT Carry Permit needs to be dramatically expanded. The class addresses what a handgun is and how to use it safely, but only in the most basic terms. It is almost impossible to fail this course. There is nothing in the course about how to store a gun safely, what you can and can not do with a gun in CT, what precautions you should take IF you choose to carry a concealed gun anywhere, etc.. Require people at minimum to attend a 2 or 3 day course (40 hours?) on CT Gun Laws and Gun Safety, prior to getting a Gun Carry Permit. Include in the class information about how guns should be kept locked up and ammunition should be kept separate and also secure; include that Gun Owners are responsible for those guns they purchase; include real information on the CT Gun Laws and consequences for breaking those laws, etc.
2. The Common Thread in Gun Tragedies = Mental Health: US Citizens have become fearful of the consequences (primarily litigation) of saying something about another person to someone in authority. Instead they ignore odd behaviors, and even ignore direct written or oral threats to public safety. Mostly people are doing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" on pretty much everything. The "See Something, Say Something" message for possible explosive devices needs to be expanded to include ANY public safety issues including possible threats by people not just devices. IF the people who "knew" the person was going to "do something" (there area always several of these after a gun related horrific event), had come forward to someone who could intervened (school official, police officer, parent, teacher, etc), many of our "gun tragedies" would have been avoided. Early Intervention and expanded Mental Health services in the schools and in our communities, as well as a public awareness of possible mental illness (educate the public), is required.
3. School Safety: Why can't most people understand that "Gun Free Zones" are exactly what criminals are looking for? Why can't School Administrators have access to guns that are well controlled but accessible? If they can't have access to a gun then why not allow Tasers in schools? Why is it a Taser is illegal for citizens to carry? Tasers are not deadly! Doesn't it seem logical if school administration and perhaps teachers had Tasers (at least) within in their reach, that most of these school shootings could have been ended before they began? Teach the School Administration and the Teachers how to safely handle, store, and utilize Tasers. Post outside the school that "Tasers are Utilized in this School to Subdue Violent Intruders".

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Summary:

Please do not take away our 2nd amendment rights by over regulating, taxing with excessive fees, outrageous over credentialing, controlling how and where we purchase ammunition, etc. With the exception of those bills that allow for guns to be carried in schools, allow for expanded mental health, or require gun owners to safely store their guns, I am strongly opposed to the over regulation in SB 1076 and the new regulations of HB 6251. The expense and excessive administration required to administer these bills would NOT improve safety but in fact reduce safety among civilians by inhibiting their ability to protect themselves and their family. And, in most cases these regulations will cause many legal gun owners to become criminals because most of us will not understand the extreme complexity of the regulations and requirements they impose on legal American citizens. For Example: does HB 6595 mean that IF I have to discharge my firearm in my own home I become a felon?