

Mr. Speaker and the Committee,

My name is Lillian Davenport. I am 13 years old, I am a member of a competitive rifle team, and I live in Simsbury. I am speaking against Senate Bills number 505, 1071, and 1076; and House Bills number 6162, 6251, and 6595.

Most of the bills being proposed are going to restrict gun owners', users of firearms', and competitors' rights. Are gun owners less equal than other citizens? We cannot expect to prevent gun crimes by making more laws restricting law-abiding citizens. Most lawbreakers obtain guns illegally, and these restrictions cannot keep that from occurring. Criminals, by definition, do not follow laws. Should the innocent be punished for the actions of a madman? That is what is happening. We did not hurt anyone, and yet the legislators are trying to regulate our firearms. Criminals are determined to complete their mission of destruction. Adam Lanza was willing to kill his own mother in order to obtain firearms.

There is also a distinct lack of education about firearms and the terms associated with them. Many reporters and legislators do not comprehend the words they are using. This lack of understanding concerns me. Unless there is understanding, a wise decision cannot be made. For example, the term "clip" is often confused with the term "magazine". A clip is a small, grooved metal trough with open ends that holds three to ten rounds and is used for loading a fixed or detachable magazine. A magazine holds the rounds of ammunition and feeds them into the chamber of the firearm. Pistol grips, bayonet lugs, barrel shrouds, and collapsible stocks do not cause the firearm to work differently; they are only cosmetic. Many of the proposed bans are based on the fear of these accessories. The lawmakers are allowing their emotions to influence the way they think.

Throughout the years, many crimes have been committed with baseball bats, two-by-fours, or bricks, but these items have not been banned, because they serve as tools or recreational equipment. Firearms do as well. They are used for competition, collecting, self and home defense, and safe enjoyment. Firearms are not dangerous unless they are handled improperly.