

To my State Representatives and State Senators and to others who have interest in this current debate. My name is Steve Wawruck, and I reside in Newington CT.

I, like everyone else on either side of this Gun Violence task force, was horrified by the tragedy that took place in Sandy Hook.

However, I am more upset that I see proposed bills like SB 1076, 505, 506, SB 505 is a slap in the face to every single young man or woman who volunteers for the military, yet alone the man who has to register for the draft. As a 19 year old Marine, I was a gunner on top of a humvee in Iraq, sitting behind a machine gun every day through the course of a seven month deployment. When I was 20, I was a fire team leader and vehicle commander of an MRAP vehicle in Afghanistan, with an automatic grenade launcher on top. Myself and each member of my team, carried select-fire (Capability of Burst or Semi-automatic Fire) rifles. My team and I are only a few of millions who have served this country the last decade at war. I will re-iterate, SB 505 is a slap in the face to all of us. An 18 year old buying a rifle goes through a background check with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System, and they should be allowed to purchase a rifle or shotgun.

I ask all legislators to take a look at the laws we already have on the books, and realize how few of them are actually enforced. Minimum sentences are reduced, firearm's offenses are lost in plea bargains; even President Obama has given a pardon to a felon who was convicted of firearms offenses. Start enforcing the laws you have on the books!

Aside from being a veteran, I also have the unique perspective of working in the firearms industry. I work at a major retailer of firearms and every day I am surrounded by law abiding citizens who are afraid their fundamental rights are about to be trampled on. I have sold hundreds of firearms to people who have not, and most likely will never commit a crime. These firearms have included the AR-15 style rifles that are targeted in SB 1076. I have sold firearms that would be classified by some as "Saturday Night Specials", which are cheap handguns. I have sold these "Saturday Night Specials" to people who probably need a gun more than me; they are people who make a low income, and live in areas where violent crime is most likely to occur. 1076 doesn't have "Saturday Night Special" language within, but I bring this up because of its history. The majority of those who support 1076 have historically attempted to ban these cheap guns; my question to those people is, Do poor people not have the right to defend themselves? Replace the word "poor" with "rural" and ask the question again. Replace "rural" with "urban" and ask again. Replace "poor people" with "Connecticut law abiding citizen". This is the question we need asked and answered when it comes to SB 1076. Gun control bills 1076 denies the right to self defense.

History needs to be brought up: After the civil war, many southern states passed laws that denied the right to self defense to newly freed African-Americans. The Mississippi Black Code in 1865 said, "No freedman, Negro, or mulatto shall carry or keep firearms or ammunition,". Yes there were provisions allowing for a freedman to obtain a permit through local authorities. I'm going to guess none were ever approved. Regardless, the end result of these laws were the public lynchings and mutilation of men who were just given their freedom, who were defenseless against armed mobs. This wasn't that long ago when you look at the big picture of history. More recently, you have Chicago, where firearms are next to impossible to legally obtain, yet illegal firearms are awash and kill Chicago citizens almost on a daily basis.

Stop attempting to control law abiding citizens. Redirect this effort towards identifying straw purchasers, and actually prosecute those who lie on the federal forms (4473) to purchase a firearm. It is a felony to lie on this form, and yet those who do are most likely never to be prosecuted. As a person who works in the industry, I would offer my support.

I have to hit a few things home, one last time. First, the right to self defense is a fundamental right. It's universal. Second, the courts have ruled the police have no obligation to protect a citizen, this once again points to the citizen in defending oneself. And lastly, since when do criminals follow laws?