

March 14, 2013

Public Safety and Security Committee  
300 Capital Avenue  
Hartford, CT 06106

RE: 3/14/2013 Public Hearing

Dear Members of the Gun Task Force Committee,

I would like to voice my opinion on the debate on gun control. As a lifelong Connecticut resident, I feel that my views on this matter are not being heard nor being represented by my politicians, and this seriously concerns me.

I am a husband, a father of two beautiful girls ages 8 and 10 and a Connecticut small business owner. I also have nieces and nephews who attend Newtown schools. It is my hope that my testimony is heavily considered in light of these facts.

I know we have hard decisions to make in our society. I want you to remember what happened in Newtown. However, **I also want you to think about me and my ability to protect myself and what is most precious to me, MY FAMILY** with whatever type of firearm that works best for my personal situation. If you restrict my ability to defend what I hold dearest in this world, I have a big problem with that.

The recommendations offered by this panel are in no way going to stop a person set on committing crimes, or to re-think their actions. I think we can all agree on that. But what you are doing is limiting my wife or other women such as my daughters (when and if they choose to participate in the shooting sports) from operating a firearm that is well-suited for women and other individuals. Would that make them safer? Perhaps with what is proposed by some of this panel you are making them a victim. **I hope it's not the later.**

We have been taught to **trust our elected representatives**. We have been taught that our elected representatives have our best interests at heart. I can honestly say here today that that is not how I feel right now. I hope that offends you and makes you think long and hard about the task put before you.

We need a change in our political system where we hold you accountable for your actions. Everything from gun control to the debt you are creating for our future generations. This has to stop. We have Laws and a Constitution for a reason. Please put the value of that back in our policy making so that our children will have the bright future that all parents want for their kids.

You have an obligation to ALL the citizens in this State, not to just SELECT GROUPS or those whose views are similar to that of your own. You have a responsibility to be IMPARTIAL and FREE OF PREJUDICES when making decisions that affect ALL that live and contribute to this State.

I support:

- (1) **An Eligibility Certificate**, including finger prints upon the completion of a Firearms Safety course to purchase long guns. However, it shall only be that the pistol permit works the same way as it does now, where both pistol and long guns are covered on a pistol permit. The long gun permit can be offered to the person that does not have the desire to own a pistol. But to require both will only look like a way to charge more fees and not about the real issue of saving lives.
- (2) **Increase Purchase age to 21 for certain long guns**. However, I think we need to re-think the way we are okay with asking an 18 year old to risk his life on the battle field for his county, but limit his ability to act as an adult in the rest of adult society.
- (3) **Expand Safe Storage Requirements**. However, I would oppose anything that would inhibit a person's ability to retrieve that firearm when it was a matter of life and death. i.e. trigger locks, removal of parts or anything outside of being kept in a lockable or biometric safe.
- (4) **No Early Release for Gun Crimes**. We need to do a better job of punishing these offenders. (In most cases repeat offenders)
- (5) **Statewide Deadly Weapon Offenders Registry**. Maybe we should look at extending this to other crimes committed such as Rape and Violence against Women.
- (6) **Reinstate the Statewide Firearms Trafficking Task Force**.
- (7) **Increase Penalties for Firearms Trafficking and Straw Purchasing**.

I oppose:

- **Increased Requirements to Purchase Ammunition and Magazines.** If you are eligible to own a Firearm you have met those requirements already. You should however have to show your permit or provide your permit number when making those purchases.
- **Safeguards Extended to Internet Sales.** Prohibiting the ability to purchase over the internet would essentially be another tax to the Gun owner. It's a big way to shop for the best price when purchasing ammo. To limit this option would drive up costs to the sportsman who spend large amount of time shooting. Not to mention give dealers in the State the ability to raise prices knowing we are not able to purchase online. It would also drive consumers to obtain their ammunition in other states therefore depriving Connecticut of the income.
- **Firearms Examiners Board.** I would not approve of removing one public member to replace them with a mental health professional. I would be in favor of adding the mental health professional. The panel has to be balanced.
- **Stricter Mental Health Look Backs.** I think this is a slippery slope. I feel it would stop people from seeking help and cause them to feel afraid of being labeled in some way, thus being counterproductive.
- **Prohibition of Applications for Permits to Carry a Pistol from Any Jurisdiction Other Than the Applicants Residence.** I'm unclear of the purpose of this proposal. I'd like more information on what this is to accomplish.
- **Require Permits for Gun Shows.** I think this is unnecessary. There is no evidence that gun shows make up a higher percentage of crime and fraud. I think this should be covered in The Gun Trafficking Task Force.
- **Ban the Sale of Armor Piercing and Incendiary Rounds.** There are shooting events that require that type of ammunition, and this law would make me a criminal to own it. I have seen no evidence of this type of round being an issue anywhere as being the bullet of choice to people killing other citizens. Armor Piercing rounds cause less damage to human flesh than the type of rounds used in the recent mass shooting, due to the lack of mushrooming effect they have on soft tissue

I hope you have taken the time to review my letter, and it has provided some insight as to why I feel the way I do. I hope we can move forward together as a State in a direction that creates a safe and prosperous future for the next generations.

Sincerely,

Richard A. Santella  
Washington Depot, CT