DISABLED AMERICANS FOR FIREARMS RIGHTS

March 14, 2013

Senators and Representatives thank you for attending this important public hearing today.

My name is Scott Ennis and I am from New London, CT. I am also the founder of Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights. As of March, 11, 2013 we have a national membership of 15,106 individuals of which 2,614 members currently reside in the State of Connecticut. Members of our organization have expressed serious concern regarding the gun control legislation that is being proposed.

Thousands of responsible disabled firearm owners can only use an adaptable rifle platform such as the AR-15 modern sporting and defense rifle. This is the exact same modern sporting and defense rifle that has been mislabeled as an assault weapon by gun control advocates that are attempting to ban or seriously restrict its availability.

The AR-15 modern sporting and defense rifle is a semi-automatic rifle. It is not a machine-gun or an automatic assault weapon. The rifles semi-automatic function allows the individual to fire only one round every time they pull the trigger. The rifle does not fire multiple rounds when the trigger is pulled. This semi-automatic functioning allows a person with a disability to be able to fire the rifle without having to manually cycle a round into the chamber, such as with a standard bolt action rifle. Many disabled firearm owners can only fire a semi-automatic type firearm. There is no operational difference between the AR-15 type rifle platform and any other semi-automatic rifle. The only differences are in the AR-15 rifle platform having adaptability features. By adaptability features I mean, it allows the disabled individual to adjust the rifle around their own bodily limitations. The AR-15 rifle platform allows an individual to add a collapsible stock. This gives the person the ability to shorten the stock just enough so they can comfortably and safely hold the rifle. The AR-15 type rifle platform also has a pistol grip as well as the added ability to allow an individual to add a forward grip.

These three options are exactly why individuals with disabilities such as, multiple sclerosis, variations of paralysis, connective tissue diseases, amputees, hemophilia, arthritis and a plethora of other disabilities use this adaptable rifle platform. For thousands of individuals with disabilities they can only use this platform. There is simply no other platform available. I will add that if there was another adaptable platform available, that platform would also fall under the exact same proposed ban or restriction as the AR-15 platform. This would happen simply because of the reasons specifically outlined as being the "assault weapon characteristics". These items you are calling "assault weapon characteristics" are the adaptable options the disabled individual must have in order to adjust the rifle around their disability. To limit these options to two or the proposed one of the so called "assault weapon characteristic" has a drastically negative effect on the disabled firearm owner. While adding one option such as the collapsible stock may be all that one disabled individual may require, thousands of disabled individuals require two or three options. It will depend on the disabled individuals own limitations. I also add that the pistol grip on the rifle should not be counted towards the "assault weapon characteristic" number since all AR-15 type rifles have a pistol grip.

The adjustable and adaptable options that I am speaking of have nothing to do with the lethality of the firearm. But, those adaptable options have everything to do with allowing thousands of responsible disabled Americans the ability to exercise their Second Amendment Right. If you ban this rifle thousands of disabled, tax paying and voting Connecticut residents will not be able to exercise that right. Why should we as disabled firearm owners not have the ability to exercise that right? Are we second rate citizens? We are Connecticut residents and American citizens just like you. Do not forget about us and do not forget about our needs I have outlined here today.

Scott Ennis
Hemophiliac with severe joint damage and founder of Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights