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On the 28<sup>th</sup> of January I participated in the Public Hearing for the GVP Working Group and saw the overwhelming opposition to any restrictions on our 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights. Seeing the current set of proposals submitted, it is clear that facts and data and public input on this topic are being ignored.

Since facts seem irrelevant to you, let me take a different tack and pose a question to you all – why do we accept risks associated with the Bill of Rights and its amendments?

We have all heard the speculation regarding the role the media plays in violence in today's society by glorifying violence through movies, video games and the news. Do any of you truly believe that none of these play any role in tragedies like Newtown? Particularly relevant to these discussions is the concept that the media's obsessions with those who perpetrate 'spectacular' crimes almost invariably perpetuate them. Since this committee seems driven by emotion and perception instead of facts I feel comfortable raising this topic. There is ample anecdotal evidence that it plays a role and certainly strong public perception that it does. We've heard that Adam Lanza was obsessed with topping the 'record'. It's not hard to find examples where the free exercise of the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment has led to direct harm. Wouldn't we be safer if we compromised on the 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment?

It seems weekly we read about violent criminals going free on 'technicalities' involving their rights, typically their 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment rights. We see these predators set free to go on and commit more assaults, rapes, and murders and we are outraged. Wouldn't we be safer if we allowed the police to simply use their own judgment in pursuing and apprehending those they suspect of being guilty? Wouldn't we be safer with police checkpoints and profiling, if police could search any car, any house they felt warranted it? How many criminals go free because they're allowed legal counsel as soon as they ask for it? Would we not be safer if we'd just use a little 'common sense' in applying the 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment? The Founding Fathers couldn't have imagined international street gangs and drugs, right?

So why did they codify these and all our Rights when so clearly there were risks? Why do we today as a society accept these risks? We accept them because we recognize that freedom is never perfect, never without side effects. We accept them because one day it may be ourselves our loved ones that need their protection. We accept them because we know what societies without free speech, without the protection against unwarranted search and seizure look like.

Why then do you refuse to see why they gave us the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment? Why do you refuse to recognize the freedom inherent in it for all citizens and instead focus on the aberrations of a mad man?

You each swore an oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the State of Connecticut. These rights were not given to us by you, nor are you empowered to strip them from us.

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