

Dear members of the CT Public Safety and Security Committee,

I attended the public hearing on 28 January 2013 held by the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force. I was there from 9:30am until nearly 2am on the 29<sup>th</sup>, as I drew a high lottery number and my testimony time was very late. Having heard nearly fifteen hours of testimonies, and reviewing many of them via online video later, I can only conclude that the solid, if not overwhelming, majority opinion regarding new restrictions on gun ownership, such as types of weapons, magazine capacity, restrictions and taxes on ammunition, registration of long guns, etc. was firm opposition to all of the above. I have no reason to believe that this meeting was unfairly skewed in favour of gun owners in representing the opinions of Connecticut residents.

If, all things considered, gun-control measures such as those proposed were not proven failures in curbing violence and not merely trading one type of violence for another, I would be a good bit more open to considering support for them, or at least a lack of opposition. I have long ago lost any heart I may have had for asking America to shoulder the risks inherent in the Second Amendment in order to preserve a hobby or a lifestyle. Those who have faced armed aggressors first-hand, and those who look with a troubled eye at what history shows to follow any dilution of the power of a free people to arm themselves, do not look to the Second Amendment to preserve such. They look, as I do, to it as a means to preserve and defend the right to life. It is because I cherish the latter that I reserve the former, as protected beyond question by our State and the U.S. Constitutions.

In light of this, I implore you, please do not proceed with any proposal to further restrict the defensive capabilities of law-abiding citizens. I urge you instead to focus whatever resources you were counting on to implement new restrictions into tightening enforcement of existing laws which would make undeniable strides toward less gun violence and increased public safety. Listening to testimony from police officers, crime victims, and state officials who specialize in firearms-related issues, I have learned that the current rate of enforcement is abysmal, as detailed by CT Office of Legislative Research Report No. 2007-R-0442 (<http://www.cga.ct.gov/2007/rpt/2007-R-0442.htm>). I believe that improving our state's dismal track record of holding violators accountable is reversed, fewer Adam Lanzas will fall through the cracks, and residents of urban areas will have greater safety and latitude to determine their own lives without fear of encroachment by gangs and drug dealers.

If current laws are almost uniformly ignored, it is irresponsible to direct efforts toward new ones. Do not propose to restrict those who pose no threat while those whose actions prove that they do are allowed to continue those actions unabated. Such is an insult not only to responsible citizens, but to the law enforcement officers who apprehend these violators, whom I would assume you would also task with enforcing any new restrictions. It is no small matter to direct people who risk their

lives and shoulder heavy personal and professional burdens to divert their efforts from stopping real criminals to the unsavoury – and illegal - job of disarming those who are not criminals except according to unjust legislation that flies in the face of both the U.S. and Connecticut Constitutions.

The people of Connecticut have spoken. The Constitution of our state, as well as that of our nation, is unambiguous. Please respect the plain truth of this. Thank you for your attention to this correspondence and for your service to our state.

Doug Parkhurst

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