

To Whom It May Concern

My name is Gary J Belanger, I am 55 years of age a resident of the State of Connecticut and a proud citizen of the United States. I am currently a Law Enforcement Officer and a Senior Firearms Instructor. I proudly served in the United States Marine Corp and have been in Law Enforcement my entire adult life. I have been an avid shooter since the age of twelve and a Firearms Instructor for differing techniques for more than a decade.

I, like you and everyone else in the country, was horrified at the tragedy that took place at Sandy Hook. I truly wish I could have been there on that fateful day for those children, if not as a defender, then as a victim, to spare even one child's life. I would have easily given up my life for any one of those children. It is a tragedy that we will always remember and one that I will freely admit should act as some form of catalyst towards the ending of violence in this country as a whole. As an avid shooter, Law Enforcement Officer and parent, I can clearly see all sides of the "Gun Control" issue. However, in my honest opinion as both an extremely avid shooter and someone with years of Law Enforcement experience I cannot agree with the premise that all of the good, honest, law abiding gun owners and future gun owners of this great nation and/or state should be made to pay a price, suffer the consequences or be held accountable for the actions of the disturbed few or common non-law abiding criminal element. Simply put, it is the easy way out. Again much like we do with the traveling public and the TSA, instead of focusing our efforts on using the tools that we know do in fact work, like the much talked about profiling, we will continue to focus frivolous efforts on infants, elderly in wheelchairs and on and on, so as to make travel uncomfortable for everyone instead of concentrating on the most probable offender, is that the right way to go?

I, as a law abiding citizen and gun owner, did not take any part in Sandy Hook or any other shooting. I, as a law abiding citizen and gun owner, did not aid or abet the perpetrator of any shooting. I, as a law abiding citizen and gun owner, did not play any contributory role whatsoever in these shootings. I, as with the overwhelming vast majority of law abiding citizen gun owners take our responsibilities very seriously, we understand the potential ramifications for our actions should we stray from remaining law abiding and responsible, yet we are once again, being thrown into the fire to pay for the egregious actions of the select few who choose by their own will to violate the peaceful tranquility of the world around them.

It appears, at least for me, that we again, as a country, are veering down a path where we once again fail to hold the individual to be responsible for their own actions. We instead lay the blame on others, or things, much like we did with the famous McDonalds coffee incident, the bicyclist who rides at night without a reflector and gets hit, the guy who tries to iron clothes that are still on his body. Let's not accept personal individual responsibility, let's see who or what we can blame seems to be the ever increasing trend. As is in this particular case, let's blame the guns, and the magazines, and the bullets, and while we are at it let's blame all the law abiding gun owners as well. When will this madness stop? When will we, as a society, stop blaming others for the wrong doings of specific individuals and get back to basic individual responsibility? You all as Legislators have and continue to experience this type of blame on a daily basis, whenever a Mayor Marion Barry of DC or some other Legislator commits an act that violates the public

trust, you all get tossed into the same barrel and labeled as bad apples, much like we the responsible gun owners are facing today.

Someone commits a particularly heinous crime with a firearm and so often we are looking for the hidden reason, were his parents mean to him, was he bullied in school, was he deprived as a child. If we are to get back on the proper moral track in this country then we need to begin to hold everyone responsible for their own actions. Sometimes there are no real reasons or at least reasons that the regular everyday layperson can understand for the commission of these heinous acts, they are simply just committed by people who just do not see the world as we do. The preverbal square peg trying to fit in a round hole.

When we look carefully at the recent horrific events of late we see the overwhelming three commonalities in all of these events. The murderers were all young males, the murderers were all avid players of violent video games and the murderers all had some kind of what we believe to be, psychological issues. The firearms used did not arrive on the scene by themselves and the violent video game play action was not forced upon them by another party. The active participation in the violent video games and the involvement of the firearms were deliberate actions taken by the individual, the individual, being the young male with what we can only assume are psychological issues. Knowing this, we are still looking as a society, to blame the inanimate objects that are simply objects as opposed to the living breathing individual that by freewill carried out the actions. Not all young males that participate in these violent video games use firearms to commit violent acts but unfortunately some do, and that is where we need to focus our attention and problem solving capabilities as thinking beings, not on the inanimate objects used in the commission of these violent acts but on the actors and the individual trigger(s) causing him to act.

Much the same we as we are all forced to pay increased taxes used to pay for child care costs derived from fathers who refuse to take responsibility for their children, why are we as a nation not holding these fathers accountable? And yet we will let this same father get away with it over and over again, why? When did we start to fail the general law abiding public? I have no ill will towards any of these children who fathers refuse to be responsible, the same as I have no ill will towards any victim of violence, but why should I be made to pay a price, especially when the price should be extrapolated from the clearly known offenders?

Let us slow down for a minute here and ask the big question. Will banning certain firearms and or magazines prevent any future heinous tragedies? If you believe so then I believe that you are not looking at this from a truly realistic point of view. You could quite frankly ban the sale of any new firearms and or ammunition and there would still be enough of them out there to outfit a small army. More legislation against the tools of this violence is not the answer. You need only to conduct fifteen minutes of research to see that we have never had an era in time where bad people did not do bad things. You cannot stop it; all we can ever hope to do is to find a way to detect and deter the potential perpetrator.

We are a free society where people are born free to live as they please, with most understanding the consequences of making the wrong choices, most understanding right from wrong and most living their lives in accordance with that philosophy. However, sadly not all people will conform

to that philosophy and that fact will never change. There has never been and there will never be a Shangri-La, criminals will be criminals and people with bad intentions will continue to act on their intentions or impulses. They, the criminal element, will always be able to obtain that which you decree as illegal to own, and they, the criminal element, will always do that which you define as not allowed. Accepting this fact is a price we pay to live in a free society however; it is price we choose to pay as opposed to a legislative price imposed upon us, such as additional gun laws that will not affect the criminal or deranged element but will further retard the second amendment right of the decent law abiding non-criminal gun owner! Would any of the current or proposed legislation change what Adam Lanza did? No, Adam Lanza was "off the grid", he held no permits, owned no firearms and yet was clearly able to succeed. He was hell bent on carrying out a mission and no law would have or could have stopped him, for God sakes he shot his own mother in the head prior to beginning his rampage, does this not show no regard for life, let alone rule of law!

Parents, Teachers, Doctors, the key observers of these perpetrators need to take a more active/proactive role in preventing these events. For too long they have remained quiet, reserved, "not my place to say anything", or simply afraid to say anything because of privacy concerns or laws, and what parent wants to admit or think that his child is even remotely capable of such a heinous act. However, it is simply madness to deal with a tool used in the problem but not deal with the problem. With drunk driving we deal with the offender, we have not banned all alcohol, with sexual assault we deal with the offender, we have not castrated every male, with assailants using knives we deal with the assailant, we have not banned all knives however, anytime a firearm is used we automatically focus on all firearms in general as a whole. This additional potential legislation makes about as much sense as the castration of all males worldwide so as to aid in the over population of China. What do I as a normal American male have to do with the overpopulation of China? Oh I get it, one of these days I might fall in love with a young woman of Chinese decent, marry her, move to China and have too many children! You are creating a far reaching plan that affects tens of thousands of honest hard working law abiding gun owners to (in theory) stop a mad man that you will never hear about until he has made himself famous. This proposed additional legislation sounds like the style of government and life found in the Soviet Union.

I like every other red blooded law abiding gun owner deplore the gun violence, any violence for that matter but we aren't causing it, and we should not be made to pay any additional price because of it. We all want to stop the violence, but curtailing the law abiders is not the way to go, it is simply the easy way out. It is a way for legislators and non-gun owners to be able to pat themselves on their backs and believe they did something wonderful, more legislation, more words. Words empty with violence reducing action but filled with warm and comfort sounding suggestions. Empty words, because to the offender, that's all they are, the same type of effect as the restraining or protection order has on the violent domestic sexual assault offender. When people, good or bad, want to do bad things to other people, and they want to do it badly enough, they will. There is nothing we can do to change their minds, the key is to find them before they act. Taking away every potential tool at their possible disposal or curtailing the life style and freedoms of all the innocent players is not the right answer and the list of possible tools will never end. I may not know the proper course of action but I do know that restricting more of my

personal freedoms for simply being a law abiding citizen is definitely not the right course of action. That course of action or reasoning behind the newly proposed legislation is not what our country was founded on, Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness are still inalienable rights with Liberty translating to mean freedom from governmental coercion. One must always remember that the Right to Bear Arms is just that, a "Right". Also remember that a "Right" is, that, which can be exercised without anyone's permission!

If you want to make a change regarding gun violence you need to effect this change upon the individuals who commit the violence. Far too often these people are given a second chance upon second chance thereby automatically delivering a message to today's youth and the criminal element, that the current justice system will not hold him responsible and that it will always treat him as simply a poor lost soul that simply needs direction or guidance. Until we take the hard stance in our society that violence, any violence, will not be tolerated, we do not stand a chance of curbing anything. In today's fast paced world of rapid deployment of information we are continually bombarded with information about violence yet we hear almost nothing about the ramifications or sentences imposed against these offenders.

When you begin to make the general law abiding populous pay a price for the actions of the non-law abiding you will subtly convert the law abiding into the non-law abiding, individual by individual. I honestly feel that any move to restrict the currently legal, lawfully obtained weapons, presently owned by these law abiding citizens, will move these weapons underground, thereby contributing to a new culture of a weapon hoarding, government fearing people. Just a simple rule of nature, we are humans and that is the way humans are, self-preservation, only the strong survive. You cannot create a violence free world by legislation. We are citizens of the "United States of America" where "We the People" still reign; we are not citizens of the "Kingdom of Congress".

"The rights of the people shall not be infringed" nor should they be when the infringement of those rights will not resolve a problem that is just as significant as the rights you are about to infringe upon!

Sincerely,



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