

Hello members of the committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my full testimony.

I grew up in Trumbull, CT and I'm moving back there this week to raise my own family there. I consider it a safe and wonderful place to grow up. I used to be a first grade teacher. I still coach soccer to 8 year olds. I play music for my profession now. Most importantly I'm a mother of two, ages 5 and 8. My children will attend public school in Trumbull soon and their new school is a short drive to Sandy Hook.

I grew up with guns in my home in Trumbull as my father was a hunter. I rarely saw the guns as they were hidden and safely stored. My father once stored a few guns for his friend. This friend asked him to keep his guns for a while while his troubled son lived at home. The friend did not feel that he should have guns in the home while his son with mental illness lived under his roof. This friend of my father's lived in Newtown. I consider him to be a responsible gun owner. However, we cannot trust that every gun owner is responsible like my father's friend, who removed guns from a house where someone had a possible tendency toward violence.

Another one of my father's friends lost his wife the day of Dec. 14. She was the school psychologist. She was killed with a gun that should not have been so easily attainable by a troubled young man. She was killed with a gun that is made to make killing easy and quick, a gun that is the often the choice weapon for people on rampage killings.

I write about my father for this reason: If my own gun-owning father, CT resident, hunter, and registered Republican can have the same views as me: a registered Democrat, musician, who will not allow guns in my home, then I believe this is a common thread, a human rights issue, a public health issue and **not** a partisan issue.

My father, nor I, see any reason for people to own assault weapons with more than one military feature or for the high capacity magazines that can hold more than 10 rounds. We both believe there should be background checks on every type of gun sale, registration and permits for all guns and gun owners.

I am happy that there are bills being proposed today that discuss an assault weapons ban of some kind. I agree with some parts of them. However, I do not feel that Bill #1076 on assault weapons is strong enough to make real change in the level of gun violence in our state.

I do support legislation proposed by Governor Malloy that includes a stricter definition of assault weapons and prohibits high capacity ammo with more than ten rounds. I support the assault weapons ban proposed by CAGV who have been advised by experts in the field (International Association of Police Chiefs, for one) in creating their list of "assault weapons."

In addition, I want a package of gun laws that limit sales of guns to one a month. I want every gun owner to acquire a permit and have safety training and have to renew their gun permits annually. I want universal background checks on every gun sale and I want all of the people living in homes with guns to be considered in these background checks. We cannot act mildly on this issue. We need a full coverage plan that actually makes a difference in preventing people from lying at gun shows, buying guns for other people who may not pass a background check, or worse, buying guns and then selling guns to criminals. We need a weapons ban that actually considers what police and experts recommend including. We need a ban that includes accessories that quickly turn guns acquired for self defense into weapons designed to kill a mass amount of people in an easy, quick manner.

I do not think gun legislation is the only way to prevent tragedies like the one in Newtown. I believe we need to have greater mental health access, we need to have mandated educational curriculum and

involvement for students and parents that teaches all of us how to deal with youth who experience feelings of isolation and desperation, we need to teach tolerance of differences and we all need to learn how to prevent a path to violence for so many of these young men. We need more research on violence and youth.

However, I believe we must begin our change with the laws.

I would like you to take a look at the following survey in which a reliable polling method shows that the majority of CT residents support gun legislation. It's also interesting to note that when gun supporters asked in general if they supported new gun laws they said no but when asked specifically if they supported each measure, their answers often changed to yes:

<http://www.quinnipiac.edu/institutes-centers/polling-institute/connecticut/release-detail?ReleaseID=1859>

I would like you to consider that there is relatively no accurate research on gun violence as it relates to gun laws. However a new study done through a Boston hospital shows that there is a relation between stricter state gun laws and fewer deaths:

<http://www.boston.com/dailydose/2013/03/06/states-with-strictest-firearm-laws-have-lowest-rates-gun-deaths-boston-children-hospital-study-finds/zaIGbTdwVaPFiGICfSITP/story.html>

I want you to consider the real representation of gun ownership is less than 17% in our state. If you consider that some of those gun owners support gun legislation, the number of people who don't support any new gun legislation in our state is probably much lower than 17%.

I support the Second Amendment. But I want these rights regulated so that innocent people are not killed in the tens of thousands in this country every year. Even Supreme Court Justice Scalia has stated publicly that gun regulations fall within the scope of the Second Amendment.

The biggest fear by groups such as the NRA, as stated publicly at gun rallies and all over social media is that an assault weapons ban means "the government is coming for all of your guns" The weapons ban in 1934 of machine guns did not ever turn into a confiscation. It just banned the most dangerous and unnecessary ones. These banned machine guns are not commonly used today. People will not witness a gun confiscation. However, we need to take the specific weapons that are human killing machines, like the ones used to massacre those precious faces and little bodies in Newtown off of the market! We need to make restrictions comprehensive enough so that innocent people are no longer killed by guns in the streets of our CT cities.

Thank you,

Kori Hammel
Trumbull, CT