

When members of my congregation and I visited our legislators and their staff members on Wednesday we heard things like:

“We are going to take this slow.”

“No law we put in place could have prevented the tragedy in Newtown.”

“We might not get this done this session.”

“It’s very complicated.”

We were polite and smiled and nodded. We thanked our legislators for their service and for their diligence. We made our position known:

that we believe that while enacting common sense gun legislation may be complex, it is not impossible. It will make a difference, and it is imperative and time sensitive. We thanked them for their time and we left the building.

I returned to church in West Hartford and then headed down the road to my home in New Haven. I thought about how proud I would feel to live in a state that prioritized our children’s safety above all; a state in which common sense would prevail over a few people’s desire to purchase weapons whose sole purpose is to kill as many people as possible; how proud I would be to live in a state whose legislators were brave and courageous enough to stand for the rights of our people to live in safety over the profits of gun manufacturers. As I reflect on our visits, I have become increasingly frustrated and angry. Because I see our this debate being hijacked by those playing to fear and greed and I see more legislators than I expected caving to pressure by the gun lobby.

We should not accept the false logic that “unknown numbers of jobs” or any potential losses to gun manufacturers’ bottom lines are worth continuing to allow military-style assault weapons in our state. (Dan Haar, “With Factory Precision, Colt’s Workers Bring A Message To Lawmakers,” Hartford Courant March 14, 2013)

The fact is that laws that ban certain types of fire arms and limit the sizes of magazines will make this state a safer place to live. No one needs access to military-style guns. I understand that people might want guns like these, but each and all of us sacrifice some of our individual desires to live in community – in a family, a neighborhood, a school, a faith community, city, town or state. Our state cannot sacrifice any more of our children – in suburban elementary schools or on the city streets of Hartford – because some people want unrestricted access to the weapons of war.

Connecticut has the opportunity now to be an example for the rest of the nation. If only our legislators will be brave enough to say: Yes, we CAN get this done this session. Yes, this is complex, but we are up to the task. Yes, we can prevent further tragedies. We will do what we can. We ask you to do the right thing and to do it now.

Rev. Megan Lloyd Joiner
Associate Minister
The Universalist Church
433 Fern Street
West Hartford, CT 06107

235 Lawrence St
New Haven, CT 06511