

Tom Mazur  
Wallingford, CT

I want to start off by thanking the members of the committee for giving us the chance to be a part of this process. I know you guys didn't have to do this, and I'm happy to see you care what we think.

I'm here today because I oppose bills that restrict the rights of responsible citizens. You'll notice I didn't mention guns. That's because the problem I have with these bills isn't about guns, it's about how these laws would attempt to solve a problem.

Here in the United States we give people a lot of freedom. But the catch is, with that freedom, comes responsibility. If we find out you're abusing your freedom to break the law, we hold you accountable, punish you, and potentially take away that freedom. That's how the system works, it allows the good people to live free, and punishes the bad ones.

So why in this instance are we punishing those who did nothing wrong? Well you might say "because these guns and these magazines are dangerous and we can't trust people to have them". Ok, at a surface level I could see why you would say that, but is that really how we operate here? Do we ban other potentially dangerous things from everyone because a small percentage of people abuse them? Let's look at some equally dangerous things from the CDC website.

Cigarettes account for 443,000 deaths per year in the US. 25,000 people die each year from alcohol abuse. Do we ban those things? Now you might say, "that's different, that's just people killing themselves". Ok, I could see how you could say that, so let's look at some more information. 49,000 innocent people die per year from second hand smoke. 10,000 innocent people are killed each year by drunk drivers. So what do we do in these situations? Do we take away these things from everyone? Do we ban cigarette packs that hold more than 10 cigarettes? Do we ban hard alcohol because it's so potent? Do we ban cars that can go over 65mph because that makes them more dangerous? Does anyone need those things? No they don't. Banning those things could save lives, and people would be alive today if we never had them. So why don't we do it? I'll tell you why.

It's because millions of responsible people enjoy these things, they use them every day for legal purposes, and they will never abuse them. Because we value individual freedom, it wouldn't make sense to punish millions because of the actions of a few. Instead, we hold the abusers responsible. We throw drunk drivers in jail, we ticket those who speed, and we fine those who smoke in restaurants. To try and prevent deaths, we also educate people, we show them how to properly use these things, and we show them what abuse can lead to. But again, we don't ban them.

So in this case, why are we talking about banning? Why aren't we valuing the freedom that millions of people enjoy and will never abuse?

Thank you for your time.