

March 13th 2016

Oppose bills: H.B. No. 5054 H.B. No. 5622 H.B. No. 5623 S.B. No. 429 S.B. No. 442

Hello, my name is Brooke Cheney and I'm from Harwinton CT. The other day, I woke in tears because I am so upset that so many people think I am scary. They think that I own a gun simply to intimidate others. They assume that I am paranoid and am waiting to get attacked so that I can shoot someone. They assume that I love my guns more than my children. They accuse me of being uncaring and unfeeling to their fears. I am assumed, by so many in this room, to be violent simply because I own a gun. I am saddened by all the people I hear in these rooms who are afraid just from seeing a firearm, because I feel fear is one of the most debilitating emotions.

One of the biggest flaws in these bills is that you are all assuming that a majority of gun owners fit into the stereotype that I just described. The people you are not taking into consideration are the real gun owners, the majority of gun owners, not the ones that make the headlines. The people like me.

I have traveled. I run an organic blueberry farm. I love to educate people about guns to help them get over their fears. I was raised to always help out anyone in need. I have never harmed anyone or anything with my firearms. I don't even hunt. I do feel more confident as a woman, now that I have learned how to control a firearm. I meditate, pray, hug trees, and want nothing more than to see violence go away in this world. I believe that peace comes from within.

I wish I could take you with me to a shooting competition. I know guns and shooting are not for everyone, but I wish you could meet all the great people that are there because maybe it could address some of your fears. You would see us having a good time, smiling, laughing, and having fun safely with hundreds of guns in one place. Gun competitions are one of the places that I enjoy very much because being at one is like being with a great big family. We are all there to shoot, be safe, and have fun. Then we go back to our jobs. The old west adage, "God Created men, Samuel Colt made them equal." comes to mind every time I am there. Some are doctors, EMTs, police officers, teachers, scientists, plumbers, engineers, sales directors, owners of companies, accountants, philanthropists, jet pilots, I could go on, but I think you are getting the picture, and I think you'd be surprised at how many people in your life might be one of 'those gun people' I know from these competitions.

We can't legislate non violence. We need to create it starting in this room, with each of us actually listening to one another, not just shutting out other people's opinions. I don't have all the answers on how to stop violence and neither do you. I have some ideas that might work and so do you, but until we actually come together and listen to each other, we will never come up with the best solution.

I oppose H.B. 5054 and all the bills that suggest striping firearms away in the name of safety. The vast majority of legal gun owners hope to never use their firearms in self-defense. They should not be punished because of a violent minority. Please join me and vote against these bills

and let us start discussing some solutions that have already been proven to work. As always, Thank you for your time and effort addressing these matters.

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Below are just some of the studies that you can look at that have proven results with helping prevent violence. It has been shown time and time again, very few laws ever have. Nothing here from the Brady Campaign or the NRA.

US Dept of Justice: Project Safe Neighborhood - "PSN programs aimed at helping individuals make good choices to remain law-abiding members of the community complement the media campaign. One such program is the Boston Reentry Initiative, in which offenders are assigned mentors to guide them in obtaining job training, substance abuse counseling, employment opportunities, and any other needed services." <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bja/205263.pdf>

FBI: The School Shooter - "We have shown that if communities, schools, government and other key players pull together to address the roots of violence, we can make America safer for our children. Communities around the country are proving that prevention and intervention strategies that help keep our young people out of trouble do work. It is, therefore, critical that we do all we can to identify young people who need our help, and then get them the help they need." - Janet Reno <https://www.fbi.gov/stats-services/publications/school-shooter> Imagine if we can stop violence when kids are young to stop the cycle?

FBI: Violent Crime Data - "When considering 5- and 10-year trends, the 2014 estimated violent crime total was 6.9 percent below the 2010 level and 16.2 percent below the 2005 level." <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2014/crime-in-the-u.s.-2014/offenses-known-to-law-enforcement/violent-crime> There is some good news, violence has been actually reduced across the country. The 2015 data won't be in until sometime after June 2016.

Domestic Violence survivors stories - "As a victim of domestic violence in my teen years which lead to stalking into my twenties, I cannot understand why some people feel that making what are now law abiding citizens into criminals will save anyone. The people they are trying to take guns from, have done nothing illegal with their guns. The problem is with the legal system and the mental health system." Jane Doe 1

"Having armed myself years ago due to domestic abuse followed by stalking, I'd be happy to talk to the politicians. I can't make it to capital though." Jane Doe 2

These are women who I have met and due to their situation remain nameless. If you would like to talk to women who have armed themselves you may contact me and I will let them know you are interested in talking with them.

Planting Your Spring Garden

For The Garden of Your Daily Living

Plant Three Rows of Peas

1. Peace of Mind
2. Peace of Heart
3. Peace of Soul

Plant Four Rows of Squash

1. Squash Gossip
2. Squash Indifference
3. Squash Grumbling
4. Squash Selfishness

Plant Four Rows of Lettuce

1. Lettuce Be Faithful
2. Lettuce Be Kind
3. Lettuce Be Patient
4. Lettuce Really Love One Another

No Garden is Complete Without Turnips

1. Turnip For Meetings
2. Turnip For Service
3. Turnip To Help One Another

To Conclude Our Garden We Must Have Thyme

1. Thyme For Each Other
2. Thyme For Family
3. Thyme For Friends

Water Freely With Patience And Cultivate With Love.
There Is Much Fruit In Your Garden Because You Reap

What You Sow. Pass It On!!!