

March 11, 2019

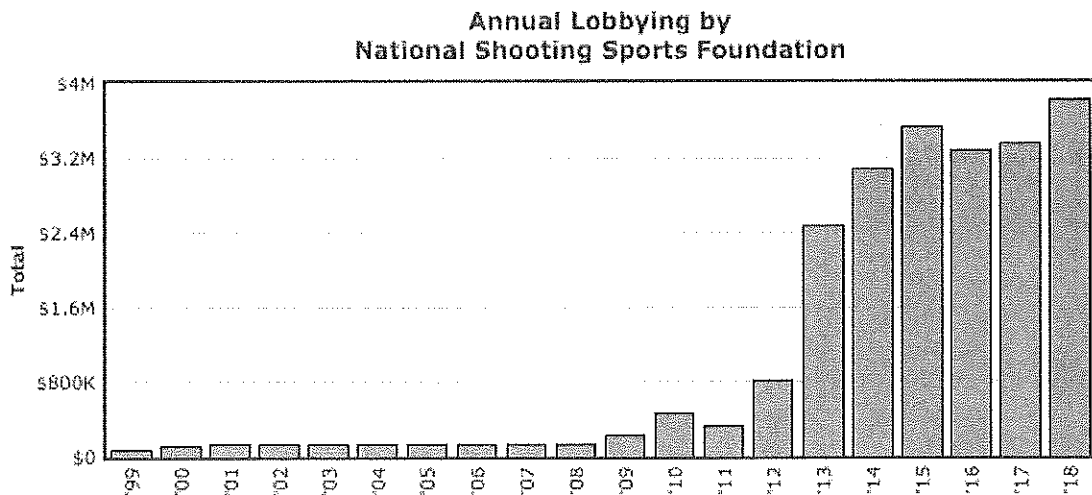
Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

After waiting nine hours, I was finally able to testify today at the public hearing. We urge you to fix your public hearing process to ensure that a few NRA-supporting Representatives and Senators cannot filibuster the public during a **PUBLIC** hearing. I don't accept the response that elected representatives should have unlimited time questioning the public. The current process disenfranchises the public members and dissuades public participation on issues that impact our lives.

As I stated during the verbal testimony, the Newtown Action Alliance supports the following gun violence prevention measures to strengthen Connecticut's gun laws:

1. S.B. No. 60 AN ACT CONCERNING THE PRESENTATION OF A CARRY PERMIT.
2. H.B. No. 7218 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS IN THE HOME.
3. H.B. No. 7219 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING GHOST GUNS.
4. H.B. No. 7223 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING THE STORAGE OF A PISTOL OR REVOLVER IN A MOTOR VEHICLE. (JUD)

We do not support any language in H.B. #7218 that would allow the NRA, NSSF or any other corporate gun lobby entity to provide its "gun safety" program in our schools. There is no proof that the NRA and the NSSF programs for children reduce "unintentional" or "accidental" gun deaths and injuries. The corporate gun lobby uses its so-called "gun safety" programs to promote gun ownership in an era of declining household gun ownership. NSSF has spent \$18,630,000 on lobbying efforts to block all gun safety laws since the Sandy Hook tragedy. (<https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?id=D000054336&year=2018>)



We also oppose the following bills that promote the gun lobby's guns everywhere agenda and limit the power of towns/cities to regulate firearms:

1. S.B. No. 940 (RAISED) AN ACT AUTHORIZING CERTAIN PERSONS TO CARRY HANDGUNS IN STATE PARKS AND STATE FORESTS.--- *We should be able to enjoy our state parks and forests without individuals carrying guns. Where there are more guns, there are more gun deaths.*

2. H.B. No. 5227 AN ACT CONCERNING THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS BY MUNICIPALITIES.---*Newtown and other communities should be able to pass gun safety ordinances.*

3. H.B. No. 5870 AN ACT CONCERNING TRANSFER OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND LARGE CAPACITY MAGAZINES.---*Assault weapons and high capacity magazines were banned after Sandy Hook shooting tragedy and they should not be transferred.*

We Support Safe Storage Laws:

What if:

- Nancy Lanza locked up her guns and prevented her son from accessing the AR-15 and high capacity magazines in Sandy Hook on December 14, 2012.
- Ethan Song's best friend's dad locked up his gun and ammunition properly in the Town of Guildford.
- The 18-year-old gunman didn't have access to an illegal gun that was used to kill Clinton Howell in Bridgeport.
- A Greenwich High School sophomore Bart Palosz didn't have access to a gun to commit suicide with a gun in 2013.

Safe storage laws for homes and vehicles will promote responsible gun-ownership and in no way shape or form violate the Second Amendment rights. Requiring gun owners to keep their deadly weapons out of reach from children (such as Ethan Song), individuals who are ineligible to own firearms (such as Clinton Howell's murderer) and individuals who are a danger to themselves or others (such as the Sandy Hook and Parkland shooters) will help to prevent gun tragedies due to unintentional shootings, suicides, homicides, mass shootings.

Safely securing guns in our homes and vehicles will prevent gun thefts, which will keep illegal guns off our streets.

Adults who do not responsibly store their firearms around their children and prohibited firearm users should be held accountable when their unsecured guns kill or injure innocent children or adults. It's tragic that Connecticut's safe storage loophole holds the minor who unintentionally shot and killed his best friend accountable while the parent who improperly stored his firearm can be prosecuted.

Gifford's evaluation of recent studies demonstrates the need for Connecticut to strengthen its safe storage laws:

- 4.6 million children in the US live in homes with at least one loaded, unlocked firearm.

- 55% homes had one or more firearms in an unlocked place and 43% reported keeping guns without a trigger lock in an unlocked place.
- 40% of teens living in homes with guns had serious risk factors for suicide and roughly 40% who had attempted suicide in the past year reported having “easy access” to the guns in their home.
- 73% of children under age 10 living in homes with guns reported knowing the location of their parents’ guns.
- Between 2004 and 2014, over 6,000 minors intentionally shot themselves. The vast majority of them used guns owned by someone in their home.
- Nearly half of unintentional deaths and injuries are not recorded due to how such incidents are classified by the authorities.
- Even these lower reported numbers indicate that from 2005 to 2014, roughly 20,000 American minors were killed or seriously injured in accidental shootings; the majority of those killed in these tragic accidents were aged 12 or younger.
- Minors have also used their families’ unsecured firearms to intentionally perpetrate violence against others. In the three years after the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, there were at least 84 school shootings in K-12 schools in the US. The majority of these shootings were perpetrated by minors. A report published by the U.S. Secret Service and the Department of Education found that in 65% of school shootings covered by the study, the shooter used a gun obtained from his or her own home or from the home of a relative. The Department of Education also reported that during the 2009-10 school year, one in every 30 K-12 schools took serious disciplinary action against at least one student for use or possession of a firearm on school property.
- The US General Accounting Office estimated that 31% of accidental deaths caused by firearms could be prevented by the addition of two devices: a child-proof safety lock and a “loading indicator,” a safety device that indicates whether a firearm is loaded and still has a round of ammunition in its chamber.
- Researchers have also shown that laws requiring use of gun locks are effective at preventing suicides. Massachusetts is the only state in the nation that requires that firearms be stored with a locking device in place in all cases when they are not in use. Massachusetts’ law requires individuals to securely store firearms in a locked container or equipped with a tamper-resistant mechanical lock or other gun safety device. This law is effective. Guns are used in just 9% of youth suicides in Massachusetts, compared to 39% of youth suicides nationally, and the overall suicide death rate among youth in Massachusetts is 35% below the national average.
- States with a law in place that required handguns to be locked at least in certain circumstances have 40% fewer suicides per capita and 68% fewer firearm suicides per capita than states without these laws. This correlation is unchanged even after controlling for the effects of poverty, population density, age, education, and race/ethnicity.

- A national survey conducted in January 2013 found that 67.2% of respondents support laws requiring gun owners to lock up any guns in the home when not in use to prevent handling by children or teenagers without adult supervision.

We Support a Ban on 3D and Ghost Gun:

Newtown Action Alliance has been closely tracking the 3D and ghost gun issue since June 2018 when the State Department, led by Trump's Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, settled the case with Cody Wilson from Defense Distributed. Under that agreement, Defense Distributed is authorized to post downloadable instructions for 3D-printable guns starting Wednesday, August 1, 2018 and Wilson was awarded \$40,000 for his legal fees. We worked with Attorneys Generals from Connecticut and beyond and Fred Guttenberg (father of Jaime who was killed in Parkland) to stop the distribution of the 3D gun files. On July 30, 2018, we sent an open letter signed by 50 organizations to Donald Trump to stop 3-D guns. (<https://www.newtownactionalliance.org/naa-press-media/open-letter-to-president-donald-trump-to-stop-3-d-plastic-guns>)

Weapons that are 1) partially completed 2) do not meet the federal definition of a firearm 3) can be sold without background checks or serial numbers must be banned to keep Connecticut safe.

3D and ghost guns circumvent our gun laws!

3D-printed guns are Do-It-Yourself (DIY) firearms made on demand by using Computer Aided Design (CAD) files and 3D printers. The 3D gun printing technology allows any person, anywhere in the world to make his/her untraceable guns without serial numbers, background checks, waiting periods, permits and other state and federal requirements for gun ownership. Some 3D guns are made of entirely plastic rendering them virtually undetectable by modern security technology. Other 3D guns others are made of metal. 3D guns are untraceable, mostly undetectable and very accessible. 3D guns in the hands of terrorists, felons, domestic abusers and other prohibited users result in grave public safety, national security and international threat.

Ghost guns are DIY untraceable guns created from unfinished receivers without serial numbers. A drill press is used to create holes in the unfinished receiver to add other gun parts (such as the stock, barrel, trigger component, and magazine) to make a fully functional gun. Ghost Guns are exempted from federal regulation. Sellers of unfinished receivers and completion parts are not required to be licensed firearms dealers, and buyers are not subject to background checks or waiting periods. 3D guns are ghost guns.

Anyone anywhere could purchase the Ghost Gunner CNC mill to make untraceable AR-15s in a matter of hours. (<https://www.wired.com/2015/06/i-made-an-untraceable-ar-15-ghost-gun/>)

Why should we be concerned about 3D and ghost guns?

- In 2013, Journalists used Defense Distributed files to make their own 3-D gun then smuggled a 3-D printed gun into Israeli parliament to test the security system.
- In 2013, 23-year-old John Zawahri, who had been kept from purchasing a gun years earlier, used a homebuilt AR-15-style semi-automatic rifle in a rampage in Santa Monica, California, that left five people dead.

- In November 2017, Kevin Janson Neal massacred five people and wounded nine others in Tehama County, California, using two semi-automatic rifles he built himself. A criminal protective order and a separate restraining order that had been placed on Neal in January—he was charged with assault with a deadly weapon after allegedly stabbing and beating two neighbors he held at gunpoint—meant Neal wouldn't have passed a background check if he'd tried.
- February 2019: Eric McGinnis from Texas was sentenced for using 3D technology and ghost gun parts to build his own untraceable AR-15 assault rifle. McGinnis who referred to himself as “Eric the Ruler” was unable to legally purchase a firearm from a federally licensed gun dealer when the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) flagged him as a prohibited purchaser due to a protective order against him from an "act of family violence" against his girlfriend. He had a 'hit list' of U.S. lawmakers.

On February 12, 2019, “A federal judge said last year the 1970s-era Arms Export Control Act that the government used to halt the distribution of DefDist’s mostly plastic Liberator pistol keeps the files from being uploaded to the internet, but they can be emailed, mailed, securely transmitted, or otherwise published inside the country.” <https://www.guns.com/news/2019/02/13/proposed-laws-would-ban-magazines-over-10-rounds-regulate-3d-gun-files-nationwide>

We are working to pass federal gun bills to ban 3D and ghost guns:

- S.459 - A bill to protect the American people from undetectable ghost guns, and for other purposes. Sen. Menendez, Robert [D-NJ] (Introduced 02/12/2019)
- H.R.1134 - To amend the Arms Export Control Act to prohibit the removal of certain items under category I, II, or III of the United States Munitions List. Rep. Torres, Norma J. [D-CA-35] (Introduced 02/08/2019)

Two states have banned 3D/ghost guns:

- In 2016, California Governor Jerry Brown made untraceable firearms illegal with Assembly Bill 857, requiring anyone who manufactures or assembles a homemade firearm to first apply for a unique serial number or other marking from the state Department of Justice, which must then be affixed to the weapon. The bill also prohibits the sale or transfer of any self-assembled firearms but not “80% receivers”. Gov. Brown vetoed AB1673, a bill that would have extended the definition of “firearm” to include unfinished frames or receivers. View Assembly Bill 857 HERE.
- In November 2018, New Jersey passed its 3D/ghost gun bill. View the bill HERE.

Many states are introducing laws to ban 3D and ghost guns in 2019:

- Texas: (Bills have been filed by Rep Terry Canales & Rep Rafael Anchia)
- Connecticut: <https://www.ctpost.com/local/article/CT-lawmakers-take-aim-at-gun-laws-13571071.php>
- Washington: <http://mynorthwest.com/1230090/ghost-gun-ban-washington-state-2019/>
- Maryland: <https://www.baltimoresun.com/news/maryland/politics/bs-md-gun-control-20190131-story.html>
- Pennsylvania: <https://www.philly.com/news/gun-control-d-printed-undetectable-dean-congress-20190131.html>
- Rhode Island: <https://www.wpri.com/politics/ri-state-senator-proposes-ban-on-3-d-printed-guns/1775768061>

The history of 3D/Ghost Gun is here for you to review:
<https://www.newtownactionalliance.org/3d-guns>

We Support a Ban on Open Carry:

Until Connecticut or Congress bans open carry, requiring people who hold a permit to carry a firearm openly to show their firearm permit to law enforcement officers if requested is more than reasonable. What is the purpose of requiring a permit to carry guns if law enforcement is not allowed to ask to see the permit?

Newtown Action Alliance does not support open carry policies. It is difficult for non-gun owners to assess whether a person who is openly carrying their weapon is a “good guy with a gun” or “a bad guy with a gun”. Guns are manufactured to kill and any visible guns are perceived to be a threat in an era of increased mass shootings in public venues/spaces across the nation.

Leonard Berkowitz, Emeritus Professor of Psychology from University of Wisconsin said “Guns not only permit violence, they can stimulate it as well. The finger pulls the trigger, but the trigger may also be pulling the finger.”

The Guardian evaluated the “Weapons Effect” (<https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/aug/05/gun-police-public-more-aggressive-psychology-weapons-effect>):

- According to the Ohio State psychology professor Brad Bushman, “research has shown humans respond as quickly to guns as to spiders and snakes, though unlike that impulse the effect must be at some level learned.” He said, “Weapons increase all of those aggressive thoughts, feelings, hostile appraisals and the type of thinking that somebody’s out to get you, or wants to hurt you”.
- “Aggressive impulses can sometimes be strong enough to override common sense, studies have found. Confronted with a pickup truck driver who had stalled at a green light, drivers in one 2006 study were more likely to honk at the pickup with a rifle than they were at the pickup without a rifle. The study developed a similar 1975 experiment that also included a bumper sticker reading “vengeance”.
- Studies have also shown that carrying a gun tends to make people more likely to deliver electric shocks, increase paranoia about people and objects, and increase testosterone. (The “vast majority” of perpetrators of gun violence are men, according to the APA.)

According to Psychology Today (<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/get-psyched/201301/the-weapons-effect>), “Several studies have replicated the weapons effect. A review of 56 published studies confirmed that the mere sight of weapons increases aggression in both angry and nonangry individuals. A more recent meta-analysis of a larger sample of 151 effect-size estimates from 78 independent studies involving 7,668 participants found strong support for the idea that weapons increase the accessibility of aggressive thoughts and hostile appraisals. However, more research is needed on the link between exposure to weapons and aggression in provoked participants, especially in field settings.”

Connecticut passed the 2nd strongest gun laws in the nation after Sandy Hook. While Connecticut continues to be a leader on gun violence prevention in America, our ranking for the safest gun

laws has dropped to #3. We can and should do more to make Connecticut the safest state in the nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Po Murray
Chairwoman of Newtown Action Alliance
P.O. Box 3325
Newtown, CT 06470