



State of Connecticut

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

January 15, 2013

DEMOCRATIC AND REPUBLICAN LEADERS ANNOUNCE SPECIAL BIPARTISAN TASK FORCE ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY

HARTFORD, CT - Democratic and Republican legislative leaders joined today to announce the creation of a special bipartisan task force on gun violence prevention and children's safety.

The task force, formed in the wake of the Newtown tragedy, will conduct a review of current law and make recommendations on a range of potential legislation to prevent gun violence, enhance school security and ensure the availability of mental health services in Connecticut.

"The eyes of the nation are on Connecticut to see how we respond to the horrific tragedy in Newtown and the plague of gun violence, said **Senate President Donald E. Williams Jr., (D-Brooklyn)**. "Our children's safety is not a partisan issue and I am pleased to join with Democrats and Republicans in crafting a bipartisan plan to reduce violence, improve school security and address access to mental health services."

"I have had the privilege of representing Newtown, Connecticut in the state Senate for the past 14 years and the tragic events that occurred there on December 14th require a response from our government and our society at large. I am pleased that this task force is set up to work across party lines to make legislative recommendations based on facts and evidence in the areas of mental illness, school safety and gun control." said **state Senate Republican Leader John McKinney (R-Fairfield)**.

"In light of the tragic events in Newtown, the public rightly expects us to deal with gun safety, school security, and mental health issues in a comprehensive way that will have a real impact on reducing violence," said **Speaker of the House Brendan Sharkey (D-Hamden)**. "Public safety is an ongoing challenge and a top responsibility of government. This approach will help ensure the legislature is able to act decisively, quickly and in a bipartisan fashion on these critical issues."

It is our sincere hope that we can come together and reach consensus on legislation that will safeguard our children and society as a whole while at the same time honor our constitutional rights," **House Republican Leader Larry Cafero (R-Norwalk)** said. "Our response must be reasoned and well- crafted if we are to be successful in our common goals."

"The evil of gun violence has touched too many Connecticut families," said **Senate Majority Leader Martin M. Looney**. "It is our goal to work in a bipartisan way and rise above politics to put in place common sense policies to reduce incidents of violence, increase access to mental health services and improve school security."

"Last month's tragic events in Newtown have left all of us asking how it could have been prevented," said **House Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz (D-Berlin)**. "As a father of two elementary school age children and someone who works with children in the school system, I'm confident that Republicans and Democrats can work together to ensure that our schools and children are kept safe."

The task force, which includes Democratic committee chairs and Republican ranking members, will provide recommendations to Senate and House leadership with the goal of producing a bipartisan emergency certified bill in late February.

The task force has designated three working groups which focus on the three core issues of gun violence prevention, school security and mental health. Each caucus will appoint as many as four members to each group.

The first full meeting of the task force will be held on Friday, January 18th at 1:30 PM in Room 2E.

-30-

CONTACTS:

Adam Joseph
Senate Democrats
860-240-8641

Brett Cody
Senate Republicans
860-240-8806

Gabe Rosenberg
House Democrats
860-240-0160

Pat O'Neil
House Republicans
860-240-8700