

I am Bob Ferguson, a resident of Weston.

I would like to thank Senator Boucher, Representative Fleischmann and the other members of the subcommittee on School Safety.

I am speaking to you today to address the issue of safety in our schools and the protection of our children. Unfortunately, MOST of the bills that have been proposed this session in both the House and the Senate address neither issue.

I am a big proponent of any REAL measures that increase safety. However, we MUST be able to distinguish between meaningful actions that actually increase safety and measures that merely give the illusion of safety just to make us feel better.

Out of 33 proposed bills in the House and Senate, I could only find TWO that offered ANY specific proposals for school safety.

- **NOT ONE BILL addresses Police Officers in our schools.**
- **NOT ONE BILL addresses proposals for socially outcast or mentally ill students.**
- **And ONLY ONE bill out of 33 addresses enhanced security facilities in our schools.**

Is THIS really the BEST we can offer to those children that were murdered in Newtown?

However, virtually ALL of the other proposed bills address legally-owned firearms and additional restrictions on current law abiding citizens.

Very few of the proposed bills even address criminal actions or penalties. I am a strong proponent of those that DO focus on criminals and increased penalties for their actions. BUT, let's not pre-emptively criminalize current law-abiding citizens, as IF they were deranged madmen intent on committing harm.

I recently saw the response of a local Board member to a resident who proposed that we hire Police officers and enhance the security facilities at our school for protection and as a deterrent to violence.

The local board member immediately accused the resident of proposing to "turn our schools into armed fortresses." He obviously hasn't been to a school in New York where security is commonplace and expected. We have police officers present ANYWHERE that we need increased security. When you go to a Bluefin's game or enter a bank, do you feel like you are

entering an “armed fortress?” Why is there such reluctance to increase REAL security measures at our schools??

I ask you to turn the clock back 5 years ago, to the beginning of the 2008 legislative session... immediately AFTER the brutal Cheshire home invasion.

Would you have been willing, at THAT time to sponsor or support legislation limiting the ability of homeowners to protect themselves or possess commonly-owned firearms? If you had passed or supported such legislation then, you *might* not be here today.

Much of the proposed legislation focuses on a significant expansion of our current “assault weapons” statutes or banning magazines that are standard issue with virtually every handgun and rifle on the market. Would Newtown be any less tragic if 15 children had been murdered? What about 10 or 5? Legislation such as this CLEARLY has nothing to do with promoting common sense measures on school safety.

I hope that the Task Force and all of the associated committees take the time to reflect on REAL measures that can increase school safety. I hope that you eventually consider legislation that does just that, rather than the myriad of gun control legislation that has been proposed thus far.

IF YOU act prudently, with a REAL focus on school safety, then, the next time that a deranged madman enters a school or public place, intent on committing mayhem...YOU can be proud that there were trained officers or other security measures in place to stop them.

Thank you for your time and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Regards,

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