

My name is Mrs. Corinne Miller, and I am a teacher at a small private K through 12 school. Every one of my students is precious, so as you can imagine, as I watched the events in Newtown unfold, I felt nothing short of horrified. And I could not help but immediately think of our own little school, and how unthinkable it would be to see such a tragedy unfold on our campus.

One of the things we emphasize in our classes is the importance of critical thinking and reasoning. So as we all here in this room consider how to best prevent these kinds of horrific tragedies, we must likewise examine facts, statistics, and then apply what we know and what we have learned from history to do our very best to protect our families, our schools, our children.

While horror, fear, and other emotions may compel us to action initially, these emotions are not what ought to form the basis for any resulting legislation. Please know that those of us who do not support extreme measures to limit access to certain types of firearms are just as concerned with the safety and well being of our children and families as those who want to see more restrictions. We understand the extreme reaction reflected in many of the bills being presented; the difference is we see other, more reasonable, and more effective approaches to preventing violence.

No doubt all of us in this room today have considered the question, "Why do ordinary law-abiding people need semiautomatic firearms with magazines that can hold more than ten cartridges?" There are many answers, but they all boil down to one common thread, which is this: for safety and security of good people. It is not the goal of a good state government to handicap good people in their ability to defend against criminals – criminals who seek to assault, rape, and murder defenseless victims like the innocent children at Sandy Hook.

In the hands of a law-abiding citizen, a higher-capacity firearm is a defensive tool – and “equalizer” that can allow one good person to defend against multiple evil people. Or, to allow one good person to defend against a single evil person who is so much stronger or bigger or more violent than he or she, that only by the intended victim being so armed, can the attacker’s potentially lethal assault be stopped.

It often takes many gunshots to stop even a single determined aggressor. Most police officers have seen the famous autopsy photo of the armed robber who soaked up 33 police bullets before he stopped trying to kill the officers. Consider any store owner who has been victimized by a group of armed robbers. How many rounds and what time of firing action would that store owner need to defend his own life? Many have learned that it takes multiple hits to stop such attackers.

The same is true in a home, or on the street when lawfully carrying concealed: a semiautomatic pistol with a substantial cartridge capacity makes much more sense for that defensive application.

In the last twenty years, we have seen epic mob violence in American streets. There were bands of roving, violent predators as recently as last year during the aftermath of the Sandy storm. And the “flash mob violence” phenomenon of recent years has left many urban dwellers in some regions helpless to defend themselves due to restrictive local gun laws. And we all recall the horrific murder of the Petit family by two attackers.

Some believe only the police and the military need these types of weapons. The truth is civilians have a greater need for them. The military and the police usually go into combat in groups. They can cover each other when it is time to reload. Civilians are usually alone when attacked, and often outnumbered by their attackers. The average response time to a 911 call to police – if you can even get to

a phone – is six minutes. That is more than enough time for a would-be assailant to accomplish a violent act.

It is not fair or realistic to expect the police to protect each individual citizen. Yet we all agree that police need high capacity magazines. Why? Because we trust them, and we want them to be safe.

Don't we trust law-abiding citizens and want them to be safe as well? Why then would we want anything less for our own families? This is why gun owners have historically modeled their choices of home protection and personal defense after what police carry. In recent years, the American police establishment has largely switched from the 12 gauge shotgun, which was also the traditional American home defense weapon, to the AR15 patrol rifle with 30-round magazine...and, not surprisingly, the law-abiding citizenry has followed suit there, too.

We all agree that law enforcement officers are the experts on the current criminal trends. If they have determined that a "high capacity" semiautomatic firearm is the best firearm for them to use to protect people like me and my family, they are obviously the best things for **us** to use to protect ourselves and our families.

As a teacher, a parent, and a grandparent, I pray that we will not enact legislation that would compromise the safety of our children and families. This would just make the horrendous event at Sandy Hook even more tragic. Let us be cautious not to enact legislation just so that we feel like we did something, if in essence that legislation actually diminishes the safety and protection of our children and families.

The victims at Sandy Hook were helpless against the madman who committed the massacre. I pray we will not dishonor those victims

by enacting legislation that renders more innocent people helpless to defend themselves.

All of the recent mass murders were carried out by mentally ill young men, all obviously in need of psychiatric help. And obviously, there is need to research and discover what factors in our culture contribute to the propensity for violence in these disturbed individuals because such individuals are the ones who commit atrocities such as the one we had in Newtown. This, and not law-abiding citizens seeking only to defend themselves and their children – ought to be the focus of the solution.