

To the Task Force of Gun Violence Prevention and Child Safety,

I am a Connecticut resident and gun owner. I own guns and carry a gun legally for one very simple reason. I love my wife and children dearly. As their husband and father, I have the responsibility of protecting their lives EVERY day. I also have a responsibility to them to protect my own life so that I am there for them for as long as I can be. Because I love my wife and children so dearly and endlessly, I also love this country for the opportunities it affords them in their pursuit of happiness and for the quality of life that it offers. I also cherish TO NO END the fact that my country will allow me to defend and protect their lives as well as my own, through my 2nd amendment rights. I am a law abiding citizen and I follow the federal and state gun laws TO THE LETTER, as do millions of other Americans who share the same sentiments I have about my family. I am telling you, that if you hinder our ability to defend what we most cherish in our lives, you will have incredibly hobbled this society. You will have brought us closer to the point where all that is good in this world is slowly being eliminated by all that is evil. The evil will not care about your laws and your restrictions. Aside from doing the impossible, which is dis-inventing firearms and taking all that already exist on this planet and destroying them all to level the entire playing field, there is no law or restriction you can put in place that will keep firearms from evil doers. Even if guns did not exist, evil will find a way to do evil. The question on the table is, when evil does do evil, what power will the good citizens be left with to protect themselves from it? With all due respect, the economy that has been created by politicians such as yourselves is a large part of why evil is growing. Some people feel they are forced to commit crime to try to survive. At the same time, police forces are being dwindled down to nothing due to budget cuts. In my town after midnight, we have 1 patrol car on duty to protect the entire town. The police departments need help to properly protect us and it is not available. So please do not tell me I am to put the lives of my family and myself solely in the hands of the police department. ESPECIALLY during an era when due to this horrendous economy that has been created for us, home invasions, robberies, muggings etc. are becoming more commonplace EVERY DAY. And even in light of that, AMAZINGLY, you feel it is a good idea to limit the ability of the good citizens of this country and state to protect themselves. I am telling you to reconsider. Your efforts should be focused on finding the root of evil. If it is not with a gun, evil will find a way to do evil. PLAIN AND SIMPLE. You need to focus your energy on figuring out the perfect recipe of events that occurs in a mentally unstable person's life that results in tragedies like Sandy Hook, and Aurora. Focusing on firearms is a knee-jerk reaction that carries the hopes of a "quick fix". You are our leaders for God's sake!! You represent ALL of us!! YOU ARE SUPPOSED TO BE BETTER THAN THAT!! Embrace the fact that there is no "quick fix" by limiting our guns and our gun rights. The solution lies within working toward the discovery of what creates evil. What drives the mentally disturbed to do such terrible acts?

I submit to you that any law or restriction you are thinking of putting forth regarding firearms, would not have stopped Adam Lanza or any of the other mentally ill evil doers had your laws been in place at the time of the tragedies they committed. Smaller magazines? So instead of a 30 round magazine, he carries 3 ten round magazines. People still die. No prevention there. Ban on the AR-15 or any other firearm? He would have easily obtained one on the black market or just used another method of destruction. Perhaps one like Timothy McVeigh. Bottom line is, once again, evil will find a way.

Believe me, I am ALL FOR protecting our children at school. Schools are gun free zones. Easy targets for sick people. There needs to be a deterrent there. Whether that be arming teachers, putting armed guards in the schools, having schools on constant lockdown, etc, I will leave that up to security professionals. But a deterrent needs to be put not only into schools, but ALL gun free zones.

I submit to ANY ONE OF YOU, when you are in your home sleeping, and you are startled out of sleep by your home being broken into, only to find a man or men breaking into your house threatening the lives of you and your family, you call the police. WHY do you call the police? BECAUSE THEY HAVE GUNS. In fact, if they showed up to your house to save your life and the lives of your family and DID NOT have guns, and as a result your family members were hurt or worse, you would be outraged. So I don't ever want to hear for ONE SECOND that ANY of you are not advocates of firearms. Because if you were to call the

police in such a situation, you ARE in fact an advocate of firearms IN THE HANDS OF THE RIGHT PEOPLE. WE ARE the right people. People like you and like me who love their families. Who work every day toward giving them a good life. Who have invested our entire lives into giving them a good life. This is what we cherish as Americans. As GOOD Americans, we have the right to protect them from anyone who wishes to do evil against them. Firearms are here. They are part of society and have been since this country was founded. They will not be dis-invented. Unfortunately, on occasion, evil hands find them. Regardless of the laws, they always will. Evil does not care about or consider your laws. The only citizens that DO care about the law are the good ones. So when you make these restrictive laws, they only affect the people who should NOT be affected!

We need all of you to start thinking on a deeper plane. Think long and hard before you weaken our ability to protect what we cherish most in our lives, simply because you are attempting the "quick fix" to the issue. THERE IS NO QUICK FIX. This is a much deeper issue than firearms. This is an issue of evil human beings and cracking the code that makes them do what they do. It's a huge undertaking that involves figuring out how to keep away from them what allows them to perpetuate evil, while at the same time, not affecting good citizens in a way that does not enable them to protect themselves when evil DOES find a way. A book of matches in the hands of a pyromaniac is catastrophic. A book of matches in the hands of a father and husband trying to keep his family warm is a God send.

I have faith that all of you can get this done as this is what we the people have put you there for. It is what we have allowed you to do for us. You were thought to be the right people for the job. Prove we were right.

Thank you,

Fran Merante