

## Testimony to the Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety

Relevant to the Public Hearings on Gun Safety at Newtown High School (January 30, 2013)

by Kelly Kennedy, 11 Split Rock Rd, Newtown CT

(submitted to [cga.ct.gov/asafierconnecticut](http://cga.ct.gov/asafierconnecticut) on January 30, 2013)

My name is Kelly Kennedy and I live in Newtown. I have never been a gun supporter or someone that actively campaigned to change our current gun laws. As a result of 12/14, my world and my views on gun safety have been forever changed.

I do not see the necessity for semi-automatic weapons or large magazine clips holding more than 10 rounds which has been the issue of debate for many these days. Although I agree with those that say that banning these types of weapons may not have prevented the events of 12/14, I do believe that perhaps it would have spared some of the lives taken that day. If it saves only one life, isn't that life worth saving? I do realize that there were other considerations that factored into the events on that day (i.e. mental health, etc.).

I also realize that many are here talking about 12/14 and other events specific to many of the recent mass shootings that have been widely publicized, as they should be. I, however, would like to talk more specifically about an event that occurred on my street, here in Newtown, just three weeks after 12/14. It was a Sunday morning and as on many Sunday mornings we went about our morning with the sounds of semi-automatic guns shooting target practice in the background. What was different about this Sunday morning was that it was the first Sunday morning that we had heard shots since the events that had taken place just across town in Sandy Hook School. I have two young children, ages 3 and 6 (a first grader, the same age as those that we lost). To hear shooting on this morning drummed up so many emotions and questions in our home. Unfortunately it wasn't only emotions and questions from my worried 6 year old, who now suffers from nightmares about people entering our home and shooting all of us, that I had to deal with. Amidst fielding questions from my kids about the shots ringing out from semi-automatic weapons in the background, my telephone rang. It was my neighbor from down the street telling me that a roofer on one of our other neighbor's roof had been hit by a stray bullet. These shots that had always been a nuisance, even more so now that my kids were scared by it, had now just become a "real" threat to my children. What is even more disturbing to me is that when the police responded to the call, there was NOTHING they could do to prevent this from happening again!

The bullet that hit the roofer was shot on private property, from a semi-automatic handgun, from over 1,750 feet away. From our conversations with Chief Kehoe, this is completely legal. It is very difficult to listen to all of the pro-gun people talking about the protection of their rights when there is no one protecting my rights. How are my children supposed to play safely in their own back yard knowing a bullet could hit them? I realize that this may be more of an ordinance issue, than an issue for this task force. As such, a group from my neighborhood has already met with the head of our ordinance committee to determine the next steps we should take to bring about changes to our very inadequate ordinances. During that meeting the chair of our ordinance committee stated that they were likely to wait to determine what changes were being made on the state and federal levels before they would

revisit the issue of the inadequate Newtown ordinance. She said if there were more legislation at the state and federal levels it would make it easier for them to enact change at the local level.

I do realize that this particular situation would not have been prevented by the limiting of high capacity clips, banning of assault weapons, or closing the loopholes in background checks. However, I share this story in response to all of the gun advocates who stand before you claiming that guns in the hands of responsible gun owners are not a threat. The bullets that landed in my neighbors' yard were shot from guns that were owned by "responsible", licensed gun owners who were not breaking any laws. Please take this into consideration. Action by this committee will only empower more change. It will be the first steps toward a safer environment for our children.