

January 30th, 2013

Co-Chairs and Members of the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety, My name is Scott Wilson; I reside in New London, CT. I did have the opportunity to testify at the Monday hearing, and I submitted testimony for the School safety committee on Friday as well. I appreciate, and would like to thank all of the different Working Groups that listened to countless hours of testimony over the past several days.

What happens next with respect to our rights may depend on the information gathered by the Task Force, and the final recommendations or actions that result from this Body. This process, if used as a vehicle to fast track legislation should be a serious concern to all of Connecticut, not just gun owners and 2nd Amendment supporters. I urge you to not let this happen.

Below are my views of what the task force will hopefully conclude:

- **Legislation i.e. Proposed Bills-** Let any bills that pertain to firearms and the like go through normal committee hearings and screenings. I am certain that there will be legal challenges to laws that pass under the cover of darkness. People should be afforded the due process to speak to specific pieces of proposed legislation, a tragedy that passed seven weeks ago does not constitute an ongoing emergency. The Sandy Hook massacre was certainly horrific, but the point that bluntly needs to be made is that this is not an ongoing crisis.
- **School Security-** Schools need to be better secured; the notion from someone that armed persons such as police, armed guards or school faculty could or would not help in any way, immediately points to a very strong anti-gun agenda by those that take this position. Other security measures should also be considered as well, such as better locks and other obstacles designed to keep attackers out, and panic systems.
- **Mental Health-** Having been a therapeutic foster care provider licensed by the State of Connecticut for approximately three years from 2006 to 2009, I have in the past administered numerous medications to children, and been involved with medical evaluations, councilors, case workers from the Department of Children and Families and also Waterford Country School. I have seen children get lost in that system, and also lost after being discharged from state care upon reaching adulthood. I do not know who follows up with these children, but I know for a fact that many discontinue medications for numerous reasons. For all I know, many may not even need them. Doctors prescribe such medications, occasionally alter the dosage and/or combine them with other drugs that may or may not include various types of psychotherapy. I cannot help but wonder that with the right counseling that maybe at least some of these former could ease into a life without some of the medications. More studies should be conducted.
- **Violent Criminals-** I believe that a number of good proposals have been put forth to make sure certain criminals serve out their sentences and not be afforded an early release grant. I wholeheartedly support this concept entirely. Violent criminals should not be rewarded for their actions. I am certainly in favor of consideration of early release for some who commit certain non-violent crimes. I make this statement as an individual that has served as an ongoing volunteer with the Department of Corrections for nearly the past eighteen years. I have seen many former convicts turn their lives around, and become productive members of society. In spite of my volunteer service, I do still feel strongly that those who would physically harm or murder individuals, should serve out their complete sentences, and the state should also increase future sentences by way of amended statutes.

- **Firearms-** The majority of the proposals put forth so far have been generated from the notion that lawful gun owners and their firearms are in and of themselves the problem. The first responses from many legislators were to make grossly over the top proposals, as the prospect of gun control quickly had become a very popular stance. Those of you that sit on this task force have sworn an oath to follow and defend both our Connecticut Constitution, and the Constitution of the United States. Ideally, you should be nurturing our rights, rather than looking for ways to diminish or curtail them.
- **Summary-** Make our streets and homes safer by acknowledging that we as individuals indeed have a right to defend ourselves and loved ones. Deter criminal behavior by punishing criminals. If the NICS System is truly broken, then fix it, as we do not want violent criminals to gain access to firearms either. Also work towards mental health solutions, but as a cautionary note along these lines- Be mindful over the ramifications with respect to individual rights, and how high the bar is set here. There are a lot of labels being slapped on people these days, and we need to be very careful to this gets approached.

As the President of the Connecticut Citizens Defense League (the state's largest grass roots gun rights organization), I wish to thank the entire Bipartisan task force for their work. May you all use the utmost wisdom as you complete your tasks.

Respectfully Submitted,
Scott Wilson
President
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