

My son, a third-grader at Sandy Hook Elementary went to school on Friday, December 14, like any normal day. At school that day, he was the classroom helper with another child and had the job of walking the attendance sheet to the principal's office.

Moments later, bullets almost ended his life.

He was in the hallway with his friend when the shooter entered the building and the terror began.

He describes his experience as hearing gunshots, "seeing" bullets come by them, when he turned toward the source of gunshots to see what's going on - thankfully - smoke clouded his view.

Our kids were so lucky. A heroic teacher, Abbey Clements, whom we can never sufficiently thank, saw them in the hallway and pulled him into her classroom...

I have no way to describe how I feel about the wonderful kids, teachers and families that were not as lucky.

How hard I (and we all) wish we could "run the tape" back and prevent this tragedy.

Here's what I want to say to each and every one of you:

I used to be part of the silent majority of people around this beautiful country that saw how weaponized and unsafe our society became, but kept our silence.

I thought guns are a part of American history. That many people know how to handle them and keep them safe. That our politicians know what they are doing, care about us, and the situation will be corrected.

Columbine, Virginia Tech, Aurora, chipped at those beliefs, but I averted my eyes. On Friday, this belief has been shattered for me, my wife, my relatives and friends, and - most important - my kids.

It's been long overdue, but it's clear to me -- I have to speak up and make my voice heard in Hartford and in Washington.

So, now I ask every Connecticut Legislator:

- why would we think that assault weapons and high-capacity magazines (more than 7 rounds) should ever be in hands of civilians? There is no sensible reason for that. I want Connecticut legislators to ban and remove them from the state.

- why are modified M-16s and Kalashnikovs sold to civilians in this country? There is no sensible reason for that. I want Connecticut legislators to implement a law that bans Connecticut-based companies from design, manufacture, and importation of any military or military-derived weapons intended for sale to civilians.

- what exactly is an appropriate civilian use for hollow-point bullets that explode in your body on entry used in Sandy Hook Elementary shooting? They are barbaric weapons designed to incur the most possible damage on human body. I want Connecticut legislators to ban and remove them from the state.

- why do we have age limits, written and practical tests to acquire a driver's license, but have nothing that would be at least as rigorous for acquiring a weapon that can take out countless lives? I want Connecticut legislators to implement permits and universal background checks on ALL sales and transfer of firearms, an age limit on operation of firearms, and a state-wide firearm operation test modeled after the tests for operating a motor vehicle.

- why do we have to periodically renew registration for cars, but do not have to do it for weapons? I want Connecticut legislators to implement firearm registration for

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all firearms with annual renewal (also modeled after the registration for motor vehicles) with safety inspections every three years.

- why there's no legal accountability for negligence in storage of something as dangerous as guns? It makes absolutely no sense. I want Connecticut legislators to make negligent gun owners liable, if any person gains access to firearms and injures himself, other people, or causes damage to property.

- why does the entire society has to pay such a high price in precious human lives and huge economic cost, while firearm manufacturers and dealers collect profits off of our grief. The Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation estimated the economic impact from gun violence cost our nation \$175 BILLION just in 2010 or \$564 per each of us... or about \$35,000 per each gun sold in this country each year! Why does the society have to pay such a high price in grief and economic impact for someone to make profits? I ask Connecticut legislators to implement taxes on firearm manufacturers and dealers to recoup those costs to our society fully.

Someone can say that you need a human to shoot a gun. What they are not saying is guns allow human feelings of malice and hate to be amplified. They amplify them in a way that's God-like, final and irreversible. It takes away someone's life with just a slight pull of an index finger. Only the most responsible, trust-worthy, law-abiding, and well-trained individuals should ever have that power.

You see that people across the country are now taking action. And you, as legislators, have to do it too. You have to protect our children and our society. We don't want a repeat of 2011, when banning high-capacity magazines used in this shooting was not even brought to a vote! Please, everyone, think of what you want this society to be for our children (if we will be able to save our children to adulthood).

My son is going to be okay. But my heart goes out to all the families... and my hope is that we can pull together to help pass some laws to prevent a terrible tragedy like this from ever happening again.

It's enough talk. As responsible legislators, act now to keep all our children safe.

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