

Dear members of the task force,

My name is Adelheid Koepfer, I am mother to 3 school age children in Wallingford, CT. After watching the hearing in Newtown last night, I wanted to voice my support for stricter gun safety laws.

When I read in the newspaper that the state of Connecticut ran out of pistol permit application forms, I get scared. Will all my neighbors and friends, who have never even thought of owning a gun until the Newtown tragedy happened, buy a weapon before the CT General Assembly takes action?

A gun in people's home will not help against the loss of job or income, it will not help against the loss of homes and belongings through yet another storm, it will not help against another senseless mass shooting, and it will most likely not even help against that hypothetical burglar unless you carry your gun 24/7. To the contrary, more guns in the hands of "responsible gun owners" will increase the frequency of events like a father mistaking his son for a burglar, a boy accidentally shooting his friend in a backyard game, a citizen coaxing first responders into a deadly trap - all sadly occurred in CT within the last few months.

Our children should grow up knowing that they don't need a gun to be safe, but rather that they are safer with as few guns around as possible. It is time to protect our children, not gun manufacturers. We must lead the nation with smart gun laws!

Please pass legislation as proposed by CAGV that will:

1. Strengthen our assault weapons ban by requiring that all weapons having military features be banned and that existing weapons defined as assault weapons be destroyed, turned in to law enforcement, or removed from the state.
2. Ban large capacity ammunition magazines of more than 7 rounds. Existing magazines must be destroyed, turned in to law enforcement, or removed from the state.
3. Require permits and universal background checks on ALL sales and transfers of guns, including long guns.
4. Require registration of handguns with annual renewal. Require: annual fee and annual background check for all handguns owned; require that the owner stipulate that the guns are still in their possession or explain how the gun was transferred to another person. Require safety inspection every three years.
5. Increase penalties for storage or safety violations. Make gun owners liable for negligent storage if a person gains access to firearms and injures himself or another person or causes damage to property. The violation would be a Class D felony.
6. Internet: Ban the right of way for transportation of firearms and ammunition bought over the internet. This means companies would be prohibited from shipping guns or ammunition to CT residents.
7. Require license or permit to purchase any gun or ammunition and tax the sale of ammunition.
8. Restrict handgun sales to one gun per month.

I also would like to reiterate some of the points made made by Newtown residents last night:

- Freedom of speech may not be used as an argument to hurt others; freedom to bear arms should not be used as an argument to risk injury or death of others. There need to be stricter limits, and now is the time to set them.

- Legislation has successfully reduced the risks associated with drunk driving, smoking in public, car accidents, and I urge to do your best to reduce the risk posed by guns.

Respectfully,

Adelheid Koepfer  
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