

I write to you in opposition of the current gun control proposals, specifically the plans suggested by Connecticut state Senator, Beth Bye. I cannot help but feel that the vast majority of these proposals will do nothing to deter, prevent, or inhibit acts of violence in the state of Connecticut.

According to her page on the state website, Senator Bye wishes to introduce a bill that, if turned into law, will prohibit the possession of firearms capable of accepting magazines which hold more than ten rounds; modify the definition of an "assault weapon" to include only one feature (the current "assault weapon" ban includes two features); impose a fifty percent sales tax on ammunition and magazines; and outlaw online ammunition sales.

On the issue of ten-round capacity limits for firearms, a recent event in early January involving a mother from Loganville Georgia addresses this very issue. While home with her two children, the mother heard knocking on the door. She looked out and saw a man she did not recognize and decided not to open the door. The man then went to his car to grab a crow bar while the terrified woman called her husband, the police and gathered both her children and a .38 caliber revolver to go hide in a nearby closet. The man, Paul Slater, successfully entered the house and made his way into the room where the mother and her two children were hiding. When he opened the door, she shot him five times in the chest, face, and neck. Slater survived, but fortunately the woman and her kids were able to make it to safety at a neighbor's house. How many rounds would have been enough? What if more than one intruder were involved? These questions are for the individual to answer, not the government. The second amendment does not protect our right to hunt deer; it protects our right to self-preservation and the preservation of our family. Arbitrarily deciding the number of cartridges a law-abiding, tax-paying citizen can have in their weapon does nothing to enhance the safety of that individual or their family. In the story of the Georgian mother, the only person that benefitted from being armed with fewer than 10 rounds was the criminal.

Currently, the Assault Weapon Ban in Connecticut defines an assault weapon as being any semiautomatic firearm with a detachable magazine and 2 or more items from a list of features. If senator Bye has her way, this definition will be changed to include only one feature. This would turn thousands of law-abiding citizens into felons overnight for features that do not actually contribute to the lethality of the firearm; rather, almost everything on the list contributes to the ergonomics of the gun. Examples include adjusting the length of pull (adjustable stocks), changing the center of gravity (vertical foregrip), and enhancing control of the firearm (vertical foregrip, pistol grip, different stocks). Arguably, these features increase the safety of the firearms as they enable the gun to be modified to fit almost any body size, type, and strength. By eliminating features that make a gun more comfortable and controllable while shooting, the law will have the opposite outcome that it was created for.

In my opinion, the most unreasonable of all actions in Senator Bye's bill is the fifty percent tax on ammunition. Mass violence is committed by sociopathic individuals exhibiting extremely unstable psychological behavior, and is not dependent on the price of ammunition. Not a single disturbed would-be mass murderer is going to wake up in the morning and say "tax is just too expensive on ammo, I'm not going to slaughter people today." That's just silly. Nor do I believe it will affect everyday gun violence on the streets by gangs and criminals who fund their operations using illicit money. The only people such a tax will affect are law-abiding, tax-paying citizens, who Bye says this gun legislation is not about hurting. How many good people will be able to afford weekend trips to the range with their friends and family with this new tax, when ammo is already extremely expensive? How many people will be able to afford to shoot competitively? How many new gun owners will be able to afford to practice enough to become proficient with a firearm and thus an asset to their home security, rather than a liability? Does all this sound "reasonable" or like "common sense"?

Again, my stance is against Senator Bye's desired gun control bills and I thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrew Hesse