

Members of the Committee,

My name is Anthony Meconiates and I am a resident of Stamford. Thank you for holding these hearings. In the coming weeks, I hope we can agree on actionable measures that will make a difference in making our communities safer. The tragedy at Sandy Hook has once again brought the gun control debate to center stage. While gun control is an emotionally charged issue for both sides, I urge the committee to remain objective through this difficult debate.

Our country also faced a very difficult time following 9/11. Perhaps we can learn from history. We enacted measures – some controversial – to make air travel safer. We strengthened security at airports, secured cockpit doors, allowed pilots to carry guns and placed armed Air Marshalls on planes. Collectively, these measures have worked. However, we could have considered other measures:

- A ban on air travel restricting flying privileges to high ranking government officials or the wealthy
- A ban on civilian aircraft beyond a certain size to diminish their effectiveness to be used as a weapon
- A no-fly list banning passengers of middle eastern descent

I am glad we didn't seriously consider any of these extreme ideas. While air travel is not constitutionally protected, it would have been crazy to restrict the freedoms of millions of americans due to the actions of a few madmen.

Sandy Hook, like 9/11, was a national tragedy. We cannot let it happen again. I believe the following proposals can have a meaningful impact on preventing future tragedies:

- 1) Incorporate medicals records into the NICS system to screen for mental illness. Require medical professionals to report any patients taking anti-depressants or other mind altering medications. There is a strong link between mass murders and anti-depressant use
- 2) Require gun owners to secure all firearms if children, mentally ill persons, or persons taking mind altering medication reside or have access to the home
- 3) Abolish gun free zones. Mass murders are cowards and want defenseless victims. They often commit suicide at the first sign of resistance
- 4) Allow teachers to carry concealed weapons in schools provided they receive the proper training
- 5) Copy the Air Marshall program and create School Marshalls

Going back to my 9/11 comparison, we enacted multi-layered security. Prevent the terrorist from getting on the plane with a weapon. If that fails, the Air Marshall will stop him. If that fails, the secure cockpit door will stop him. If that fails, the pilot stops him.

Our children deserve a multi-layered security plan. We need to prevent mass murderers from buying a gun or stealing one. If that fails, the School Marshall will stop him. If that fails, armed teachers will stop him.

In closing, I urge you to protect the rights of free, law-abiding, tax-paying citizens, fix the current problem and please don't create any new ones.