

Testimony to the Subcommittee on Gun Violence

I would like to acknowledge the Committee Chairs: Senator Looney, Rep Miner, and members of the Task Force Committee on Gun Violence.

My name is Barbara Richardson. I live in Sandy Hook.

I am speaking today to encourage you to pass the legislative proposals submitted by CT Against Gun Violence; a comprehensive package of gun violence prevention measures which could be a model for the nation and help prevent the mass shootings like what happened at Sandy Hook School.

I am the parent of a son who attended our much-loved Sandy Hook Elementary School. In our neighborhood are families who lost children and also the Lanzas. I am a sister to someone with mental illness and depression who was narrowly averted from purchasing a gun. I am a registered nurse with long experience in the trauma caused by guns in suicides, accidents and crime, as well as the decades long effects on families and loved ones. One of my first patients was a 19 year old accidentally shot by his 13 year old brother using a gun owned by their "gun enthusiast" father. He died after a year in the hospital.

The causes of gun violence are complex, and solutions require rational, well-enforced laws as well as better care for mental illness and security. It will require of gun owners and sellers individual responsibility and limitation of some freedoms in the interest of public safety. The government does this with other potentially dangerous consumer products such as cars, ladders etc. I remember when the law was passed making seat belt wearing mandatory - how annoying to be told what to do by the government. How silly that seems now with so many lives saved.

The popularization in recent years of military style rapid-fire semi-automatic rifles with large capacity magazines factors into what happened in my town. We need to ban or severely limit these types of weapons as well as establish universal background checks to better ensure that wrong people don't have guns. Unfortunately, the gun industry including the NRA and NSSF have for years used their money and political influence to undermine research into gun violence, weaken gun laws and undermine the ability of law enforcement to stem gun violence on the national, state and local level.

Wayne LaPierre said in a speech "The guys with the guns make the rules". I hope that with the wellbeing and safety of the public in mind, you prove him wrong.

Thank you

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