

A CALL TO ACTION

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Ladies and Gentlemen, thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. First and foremost, I want to extend my condolences to the families hurt by the grave tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown.

I am here today both as a parent and as a recreational shooter.

From time to time, there are truly unique events that bring us together and cause us think about our priorities. The unfortunate tragedy in Newtown has sparked a national focus on senseless violent crime and mass murder.

Is the issue really only about guns?

As a parent I understand the difficulty and of obtaining the resources for a child with special needs.

The immediate temptation is to seize the moment, build on the momentum and enact what we perceive to be the strictest laws. Oftentimes, in our haste to enact new laws, we layer over existing laws that are either not working or not enforced, and overlook solutions that would prevent or make it more difficult for a Newtown type of tragedy to happen again.

In a knee-jerk reaction, New York State rushed through legislation designed to be the most restrictive in the nation: banning some firearm handle styles, eliminating flash suppressors, prohibiting adjustable or folding stocks, placing limits on magazine size, **including the sizes generally utilized by law enforcement.**

The District of Columbia and Chicago are two cities with arguably the highest rates of gun violence in the country. These cities have in common some of the most restrictive gun laws in the nation. Connecticut gun laws are considered the 5th most restrictive, yet Bridgeport and Hartford struggle with large numbers of homicides each year. Clearly, there is more to the issue than gun restrictions.

We should direct our attention to policies, a "Newtown Initiative" that will prevent violent crime and make Connecticut a better and safer state:

1. Availability of and access to appropriate mental health resources
2. An explanation from our congressional delegation in Washington, as to why the federal enforcement of existing gun regulations, is reportedly down by 40%
3. Enforcement of gun trafficking laws
4. Establishment of accessible gun safety programs
5. Elimination of early release programs for those that have been convicted of violent crimes and

6. Creation of a "dynamic economic environment" that fosters competitive business opportunities and jobs in cities where the homicide rate is high and the chief industry is now the industry of crime.

We are a country of big ideas. We solve tough problems. We cannot legislate, tax, spend or subsidize our problems away. At this very moment, we are shaping our future. Will we be a California or an Illinois? Or will we create an environment conducive to growth, like Texas, Virginia or Iowa?

My challenge this morning was to develop and present to you in 3 minutes, a framework for a positive direction. My charge to you, ladies and gentlemen, is to launch the "Newtown Initiative" that will last for generations and make us the "go to state," a state that provides an abundance of business and personal opportunities and furnishes its residents with the resources to make us safer, stronger and more successful. Please join me in this imperative. Thank you.