

My name is Brian Clements, and I am a professor at Western Connecticut State University. I live in Newtown, both of my children went to Sandy Hook, and my wife, Abbey, is a second-grade teacher at Sandy Hook.

I am writing in support of increased regulation of gun ownership in CT, and I'd like to address those of you on the commission who are owners of automobiles.

As you know, the state of CT requires you to register any vehicle you own with the state. The state also requires that you demonstrate competency to operate your auto before you are licensed to do so. You are provided with an identifying marker—a license plate—that must be attached to your vehicle. You are required by state law to have insurance for the operation of that auto that covers both liability and property damage. You are prohibited from operating your vehicle while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, including prescription drugs that might impair your ability to operate your vehicle safely. You pay property taxes on your vehicle. In order for your automobile to operate, of course, you have to put gas in it, which in CT is highly taxed. When you sell your auto, a paperwork trail is required and the person or business purchasing it is required to register the auto.

We must make gun ownership in CT more restricted than vehicle ownership. In addition to background checks for ANY sale of a firearm, we should be able to say:

The state of CT requires you to register any gun you own with the state. The state also requires that you demonstrate competency to operate your gun before you are licensed to do so. You are provided with an identifying marker that must be attached to your gun. You are required by state law to have insurance for the operation of that gun that covers both liability and property damage. You are prohibited from handling your gun while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, and neither you nor anyone in your household may own any gun if you are taking certain prescription drugs that might impair your ability to operate your gun safely, or if you suffer from certain mental illnesses. You pay taxes on your gun. In order for your gun to operate, of course, you have to put ammunition in it, which in CT is highly taxed. When you sell your gun, a paperwork trail is required and the person or business purchasing it is required to register the gun.

This should be the baseline of gun ownership in CT. But in addition, for the safety of the general public, we must institute a prohibition of automatic and semi-automatic weapons along the lines of what our neighbors in NY have established. In truth, though, such prohibition only makes sense if there is no grandfather clause, because there are already millions of these weapons out there. No one realistically sees confiscation of all of those millions of weapons as feasible, so there must be incentives for owners of

those weapons to give them up—buyback programs, amnesty programs, and, as I already mentioned, taxes. Until the plague of gun violence is controlled in this country, it is only fitting that the burden of covering the massive cost of dealing with gun violence be shouldered by those who insist upon buying and selling assault weapons and handguns. How about a \$1 tax per weapon to gun sellers for every gun death in the state? I bet if such a tax were instituted, the NRA would do everything in its power to get illegal guns off the streets.

The NRA will argue that these types of weapons are used sometimes by law-abiding gun owners. That may be true—but we can't afford sometimes. Most drive-by shootings and mass shootings involve automatic and semi-automatic weapons. These deaths are not worth the maintenance of anyone's hobby nor the amelioration of irrational fears of a coming tyranny. And if law-abiding gun owners continue to abide by these laws, then they will be assisting in the process of getting illegal guns off the streets and legal guns out of the hands of people who should not have them.

Thank you,

Brian Clements, PhD