

Dear Legislators and Committee Members,

My name is Brian Ellsworth; I am 59 years old. I am a long-gun owner, a hunter, a NRA member, a father, a grandfather and a CT resident for over 50 years. My occupation is an Electrical Engineer.

Please allow me to expressing my sincere sympathy to the families, relatives, friends, first responders, or anyone else connected with the Newtown tragedy. That situation was horrific and I believe many people will long carry the scars.

The proposed solutions regarding firearm safety seems to have taken two distinct paths.

- a) Assist the individuals prone to perpetrating these events by improving mental health diagnostics in order to prevent them from having any firearms.
- b) Reduce the type of equipment assumed to be most dangerous based on the events we have already witnessed.

There is a third idea to simply eliminate all private ownership. I am going to dismiss this concept based purely on the impracticality of it. If you are of this persuasion there is little point in even discussing it with you.

On mental health requirements:

There are many proposals on this topic. All of them seem very complicated and it is difficult to imagine we can implement some of them without a multitude of unintended consequences. All seem to require some increased forms of registration, tracking, and administration.

I would like call your attention to an existing program which the state currently has in place that has proved to be very effective in relation to gun safety. Since 1955 the DEEP has offered instruction in order to promote the safest hunting techniques. CT law now requires the completion of that instruction for that any person hunting in the state. A Certificate of completion from the Conservation Education / Firearms Safety Program is required to qualify for a hunting license. Their program has a good track record. I mention this program because it works. Something specifically tailored for gun owners to remind them of their responsibility seems prudent. If the results are anywhere near as good as the hunter safety program we will make some progress.

In my home I am the first responder to any potentially dangerous situation. We all are. I believe that by setting standards, guidelines and using mandatory education we can improve the training, skill levels, and decision making ability for every gun owner in their role as a first responder. Before any doctor or mental health professional detects a risk the people in the home are in a better position to determine when some action must be taken. Training them to take that responsibility and when to act is critical. This included gun owners and families.

I have personal experience with making a decision to get my hunting guns out of my home. That was a difficult decision to make. I believe that with the right instruction programs we could go a long way in helping people recognize when they need to take action and then offer guidance on how to do it. The recent events come to mind. I am not blaming anyone but I have to wonder what the outcome would have been if the firearms in that situation were removed.

On reducing the types of equipment:

I do not believe that stricter controls, more regulations, higher ammo taxes, registration, limits on magazine size, more rules, and more obstacles for law abiding, responsible gun owners will accomplish anything to prevent tragedies like the one we have recently witnessed. The perpetrators of these heinous crimes have already stepped outside of the equipment and regulatory boundaries you have set and they will continue to do so regardless of where you tweak or nudge any future regulations or boundaries.

In 3 minutes I cannot address each proposal but consider these magazine restrictions. What difference would it make if a criminal's magazine holds 10 shots or 15 when he is pointing a weapon at a bunch of 6 year olds? What difference would it make if his weapon held only one bullet? If having only one bullet means that only one child will die then in my opinion that is still one child too many. This is not an answer.

We hear talk from our politicians who say, "You don't need 30 shots to kill a deer." When I hear suggestions that we construct our laws and regulations based solely on what someone else determines that another person "needs" I cringe. If we are going to start governing by establishing "what you need" then many of the things most of us currently own are going to be taken away. No one "needs" a car that is capable of going 40 mph over the speed limit. No one needs to hunt. No one needs a speed boat or a jet ski or a vacation in Hawaii or alcohol or a multitude of other things. I hope we don't go down this road of picking and choosing what another person "needs."

Thank you,

Brian Ellsworth – Rocky Hill, CT