

Newtown Hearing
January 30, 2013

My name is Brian King and I am a Fairfield resident, a husband, a father, and a physician. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion and concerns.

It is no secret: gun violence is rampant. 33 Americans are murdered with guns every day or nearly 12,000 innocent people each year. My mother was a victim in a mass shooting. Never in a million years would I have guessed that my mom's life would be taken away so quickly at the hands of a deranged individual wielding two semi-automatic pistols. On April 3, 2009, Jiverly Wong, a 41 year-old man burst into the American Civic Association immigration center in Binghamton, NY and within minutes fired 98 bullets. He wore a bullet-proof vest, carried clips with as many as 30 rounds, and went so far as to barricade the rear door of the building with his car, ensuring that no one could escape. Four people were critically injured, and 13 were killed – among them was my mother. She was substitute teaching English as a Second Language class to immigrants aspiring to a better life in America. Ironically, one of the students had fled Iraq, hoping to protect her family from its violence.

I am also a vascular surgeon. I have seen the physical and emotional damage inflicted by countless shootings. You name it, I have seen it. I have seen grotesque deformities, lost limbs, shredded organs, massive bleeding, and all too often, death. I have seen the devastation caused by shotguns, assault rifles, handguns, large caliber bullets and high velocity weapons. *I have seen no lives saved from a fired gun.*

This month, the American College of Surgeons, the largest organization of surgeons in the world, with nearly 75,000 members, issued a statement on firearm injuries. "Because violence inflicted by guns continues to be a *daily event in the United States* and *threaten the health and safety of the public*, the organization – and I – support:

1. Legislation banning civilian access to assault weapons, large ammunition clips, and munitions *designed for military and law enforcement agencies.*
2. Enhancing *mandatory background checks for the purchase of firearms to include gun shows and auctions.*
3. Assuring that healthcare professionals can fulfill their role in preventing firearm injuries by health screening and referral to mental health services for those with behavioral medical conditions.
4. Developing and promoting proactive programs directed at improving *safe gun storage* and the teaching of non-violent conflict resolution for a culture that often glorifies guns and violence in media.

I respect the 2nd amendment. I recognize that the great majority of gun owners are law-abiding citizens. A reliable system of background checks on *every gun sold* – including private and gun show sales – just makes sense. The system is designed to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. It is frustrating and perplexing as to why this idea is so hard for some people to accept.

I have never followed local politics very closely until now. As a family member of a victim, as a physician, and as a father of young children, I *will* be watching closely how our legislators vote on this issue. I thank you for the chance to express my views, and hope that you have the courage to do what is right.