

Dear sir or madam,

I am the Forensic Scientist for the Bridgeport Police Department and my area of expertise is Firearm and Tool Mark Identification. As such, I maintain certain records of my examinations at the police department and would like to share some simple statistics with you.

Since November 1996, I have examined approximately 2370 firearms. Of that number 36 of them were either .223/5.56mm or 7.62x39mm. Calibers .223 and 5.56 mm are for AR15 type firearms and 7.62x39mm is the main caliber of AK47 type firearms. The percentage of those guns was about 1 ½ %.

I did further research on homicides and assaults in the years 2006 to 2012 inclusive. Of the 217 such cases, there were 912 bullets and 466 cartridge cases recovered. One assault involved .223 caliber and none involved 7.63x39mm caliber. The largest number cartridge cases recovered in one case was 37 and that involved two guns. The investigations that involved the recovery of eleven or more cartridge cases was 22. Of the 22 cases, 21 involved 2 or more guns.

These are real numbers from real cases in a real city police department. This is not something made up or fabricated.

High capacity magazines have been "banned" before. It proved nothing and the ban was lifted a few years ago. There are many guns in existence, since the 1860s, which hold more than 10 cartridges, the early Winchester lever action rifles, for example, and many tube feed 22 caliber rifles. There are some modern firearms for which no other magazine exist. What do you propose we do with them?

In your infinite wisdom, you outlawed bayonet lugs, flash hiders, and collapsible stocks. In over forty years of being a firearm and tool mark examiner, I have never seen these components inflict any injury whatsoever on any person. In your infinite wisdom, you outlawed fully automatic firearms that have the capability of firing a single shot. Ladies and gentlemen, I really need help with that one.

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The point of the preceding two paragraphs is to show you what happens when hasty decisions are made by people in a rush to deal with something that they know little or nothing about.

We all agree that the Newtown case is a tragedy. I submit to you that you cannot legislate away insanity, which I think is the root cause of this case. You are trying to outlaw the mechanical device instead of the user. The mechanical device can do nothing without the intervention of a person the same way your car will not drive itself. Laws must be passed based on research and logical thinking, not on emotions.

In my experience I have seen many instances of gun charges being negotiated away by state's attorneys to get the defendant to plead to the more serious charge. If you want to do something meaningful, pass a law that makes gun violations non-negotiable by state's attorneys – make them prosecute.

Finally, if you have questions about guns, guns in crimes, or statistics dealing with gun use, I am willing to help you in any way I may. You may also contact the State Police Forensic Lab in Meriden, where I also work and we would be happy to help you.