

Hello Mr. Miner & Mr. Looney and members of the committee. My name is Brooke Cheney from Harwinton CT. I am mother of a 5 and 6 year old, a competitive pistol shooter and instructor. The events at Sandy hook deeply affected me.

Much of what I have seen and experienced personally in the weeks since Sandy Hook are people being polarized and not communicating. Everywhere there is misinformation. Many people do not understand that the rifles they have vested so much time and emotion into taking off the streets are rarely used in violent crime, according to the FBI data.

On the other side, there are folks who can't understand why they being punished for the actions of one boy. People are fearful of being targeted for being gun owners. People are worried about losing their heritage and freedom. So they are fighting for what they believe.

We are currently caught up in an emotional frenzy. Both sides are worried about what will happen if they don't "do something". As legislators, I am sure that you have heard much from both sides, urging you to "DO SOMETHING"

Children were killed in school, breaking hearts all across America. The broken hearts that this tragedy has caused are not healing. Both sides are making it worse. We are not listening to each other and are creating more hate and animosity amongst each other. Folks are turning a blind eye to what really scares them: America is broken if our youth have no respect for life. If we can create a big enough scapegoat, we do not have to accept the real problem.

I don't want to save "just one life". I want to save thousands! As a nation, we need to calmly listen to each other, and start accepting that violence as a whole is what needs to be addressed, not an inanimate object. We must stop attacking each other and work on treating each other with respect in order to stop violence in our society.

We all want the same thing: an end to violence. It will start as soon as everyone stops being so violent towards each other. Each one of us can make a difference. Look into your heart, realizing your heart is the only one you have the power to change. Find what makes you at peace; realize you can only lead by example. If you can be at peace, so can others around you. Curb your venom and hatred for those who don't agree with you. All of us know some things, none of us knows everything. Stop violence right now, in your own heart, in this very room. Then carry it beyond these walls. This is how we can stop violence.

In the need for brevity I have included specifics for the proposed legislation in written form in the rest of testimony. In short I oppose any legislation that impacts law abiding citizens while having no impact on violence.

Thank you for your time.

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I have heard time and time again you will follow the data and go where it points you. I would ask that you also keep reminding yourself what is the true purpose? Is it truly, Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety? If the true purpose is to cut down on violence, please make sure the data that you have supports that idea. Many of the suggestions that are currently being put forth are nothing more than punitive for law abiding citizens such as myself.

Also I would like you to see what you are suggesting regarding magazine capacity has little or no data to support it. It is just an arbitrary number. However, that said if I were to ever need to defend myself I would like to have as many bullets in my gun as it can hold. I have two small children to defend, 10 or 7 bullets may not be enough to save the lives of me and my children. Please do not look at these ideas as only affecting criminals. Police officers have 17 and 30 rounds to protect themselves because it gives them the best chance to survive a violent encounter. I deserve the same. As a competitive shooter and instructor I train more often than most police do. I get training on a regular basis, more than the once or twice a year.

Making public the knowledge that someone has a pistol permit does nothing but create a target. There have been many threats from various folks suggesting that "all gun owners should be taken out and shot with their own guns" as well as suggesting that "I hope your 6 year old daughter gets shot in the head" because the father supported a gun rally. All of Nancy Lanza's friends knew she had guns, it didn't stop the atrocity from occurring. Also there are plenty of people who get their permits and never get guns. Just because someone has a permit does not mean they have a gun.

Registration of all the fire arms also doesn't prevent any crime from occurring. Again I ask what are we trying to do? Preventing crime starts with our society as a whole. Criminals don't care about laws.

Punitive taxes on ammunition or restricting access also does nothing to prevent crime. It only makes it more arduous for law abiding citizens. With the limitations that you are considering imposing you are making it hard on law abiding citizens who enjoy the sport of shooting. My husband and I only found this sport 2 years ago. We have fun together doing this. Imagine what ever hobbies you have and think about how you would feel if all of a sudden it cost twice as much. We are not violent criminals.

There are plenty of things that can be done to address violence in our communities. Sick people and criminals are the ones that do harm to others. These are the groups that need attention and intervention. This is the same theme that you have heard on Friday and will most likely hear on Tuesday.

Sincerely,

Brooke Cheney  
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