

January 28, 2013

To the members of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group:

I am concerned with the haste with which gun control bills are being rushed through the legislature. The Connecticut State Police do not expect to complete their investigation and have a final report on the Newtown tragedy until this summer. All the facts of the shooting are not available, yet a frenzy of gun control bills are being proposed. If and when any or these bills are passed, the citizens of Connecticut and the politicians who voted for them will have to live with the consequences for a very long time.

I would ask the members of the committee to consider the fact that even with the recent tragedies of Newtown, Aurora, Virginia Tech, and Columbine, violent crime and gun crime have decline in the U.S. by almost 50% in the last twenty years. This at a time when countries like the U.K. and Australia, which have all but banned private ownership of guns, have seen their rates of violent crime surge. Gun crime in the U.S. is dominated by handguns. Rifles, of which assault rifles are a subset, account for only about 4% of gun related deaths in the U.S. Gun control laws that restrict the rights of law abiding citizens to possess rifles and shotguns will do little to reduce violent crime.

If you consider who commits gun crimes and where gun crimes are being committed, obvious patterns emerge. There are mass shootings committed by mentally ill individuals and inner city crime, where poverty and the lack of education and opportunity drive people to violence. Until we address major social issues like mental health and poverty our society will be plagued by violence.

As a gun owner I would support universal background checks, but not gun registration. Other measures being considered like the 50% ammunition tax seem punitive, as if the authors of the bills are trying to punish law abiding gun owners. I ask that the members of the committee not get caught-up in the hysteria currently sweeping Connecticut and consider the long-term ramifications of their actions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Bruce H Williams Jr.
East Haven, CT