

Dear Members of the General Assembly,

Due to work I will be unable to attend the January 28th meeting, however I still would like to address my views to the assembly.

My name is Byron York and I currently live in Ridgefield, CT. I have been a CT resident for the past twenty years and became interested in firearms at a young age. Since the age of ten I have been an active member of the firearms community here in Connecticut. Like many shooters I learned the responsibility of firearm safety at a young age and understood the dangers if I misused a firearm in any way. Ten years later I own several firearms including about half a dozen modern sporting rifles, or as some of you would call them "assault weapons" as well as standard capacity magazines which many of you would refer to as "high capacity" magazines. Like all firearms owners I was horrified and heartbroken when I heard of the Newtown shooting. As someone who is not a very emotional person it is very rare for me to cry, and I cried for those twenty children and six staff members that day. When the media only hours after the shooting began started the talk of gun control and what to do to stop future tragedies like this from happening, I couldn't find a single source that was proposing well thought out legislation rather than knee jerk/emotion based responses. Taking firearms from those that obey the law is not the answer. We must focus on areas such as school security and mental health. I grew up in Ridgefield, one of the safest towns in the entire state. We had police officers in our High School although our town had virtually no violent crime. There was no outcry when that policy was introduced and in the past the vast majority supported having armed police or staff in schools. However when the NRA came out and suggested that we have armed police or armed staff members there was outrage and many said it would only cause more violence. I cannot imagine that having armed police officers in our schools or trained staff members could possibly pose more of a threat than a having an active shooter with no one to stop him. The following bills: SB-600, SB-601, SB-604, SB-605, SB-607, SB-608, SB-609, SB-610, SB-611, SB-613, and HB-5950 are not only unconstitutional, but they will only affect those who lawfully own firearms. Criminals by definition disobey the laws and will simply laugh at these new proposals. Instead these laws meant to help will only create more victims. To prevent these future tragedies we should focus on mental health and school security. In the past the majority of these atrocities have been carried out by individuals suffering from a range of mental and social disorders. Due to our poor mental health care system they fall through the cracks, don't receive treatment, and their condition gets worse. In recent years we have seen security rise in public places where large crowds are frequent and due to this increase in security there are often few crimes committed in these areas. These areas of increased security deter madmen from attempting a mass shooting because they know there will be resistance and that they won't have control. This is why they choose gun free zones. A gun free zone is a guarantee for an uninterrupted killing spree. Just knowing that staff members are armed or that there is an armed security presence would be a deterrent to a would be shooter or at the very least those armed would be a means to stop an active shooter. There are bad people in this world and there always will be. They will find ways to do harm no matter what tool they use. We have seen people killed in masses by knives, cars, airplanes, bombs, and in one of the worst tragedies in American history only used a rental truck, diesel fuel, and fertilizer. I ask each member of this council to not focus on the tool, but on the people that commit these crimes. It is the ONLY way we can make a significant impact. Do not pass ANY laws restricting the rights of the Second Amendment.

Regards,
Byron J York III