

I am an independent who voted for Obama, twice, as well as for Governor Malloy and Tom Gaffey. I earned a Ph.D., and have lived across the United States as well as in a number of countries overseas. I am also an occasional hunter and target shooter.

What happened in Newtown was a tragedy, but a tragedy committed by a disturbed individual. The current push to get tough on guns as a response to Newtown, however, makes a mockery of the Connecticut Constitution as well as the U.S. Constitution while providing no evidence that the gutting of these foundations of our American civilization would reduce the chance of another Newtown. Every tragedy such as Newtown was committed by disturbed individuals who had no legal right to be carrying a gun. Let us focus our efforts on those individuals.

People are the problem, not assault weapons. FBI statistics show that in Connecticut in 2011, exactly one murder was committed using a rifle (most likely not an assault weapon but the statistics don't provide that detail), while six were committed using no weapon but the murderer's hands or feet; for the USA as a whole, fists and feet were used to commit more than twice the number of murders in 2011 than were rifles of all types (<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-20>).

As for magazine capacity, there are those who say that if Lanza had been forced to stop and reload, children could have been saved. That makes no sense. It takes mere seconds to reload. That is not enough time for the police to arrive, and a person who runs attracts the eye of the murderer and perhaps becomes the next target.

Instead of passing laws that will make no difference to any criminal but only to law-abiding citizens, I urge you to take actions that will truly make a difference, such as these:

1. To combat terrorist gunmen who had targeted Israeli schools, the Israeli government placed armed guards in the schools and gave firearms training to teachers who wanted it. The result -- terrorists switched away from those protected targets.

If you are serious about protecting our children, you will take similar action.

2. When New York City had problems with gang violence, it placed metal detectors in schools. The result -- gang violence in the schools receded.

If you are serious about protecting our children, you will take similar action.

3. Get illegal guns off the streets. That is much likelier to reduce gun violence than restricting already law-abiding citizens. Target the criminals.

If you are serious about protecting our children, you will take action here.

4. Work to improve facilities and treatment for those who are mentally ill. No one in their right minds commits the type of acts we have seen in Newtown, Aurora or Columbine.

On average, the US has one third the number of psychiatric beds per 100,000 people that experts agree is the absolute minimum, and one twentieth -- 5% -- of the number of beds per 100,000 people that we had in 1955

(http://www.treatmentadvocacycenter.org/storage/documents/the_shortage_of_public_hospital_beds.pdf).

If you are serious about protecting our children, you will take action here.

In response to those who say they do not want guns in schools, I would say that the Lanzas of this world will always bring guns to schools, illegally, as long as you continue to make schools an easy target. By not allowing those who wish to protect themselves to do so, you are inviting another tragedy like Newtown. The December shootings at a mall in Oregon seemed to have ended when a legally armed citizen drew his gun and the murderer, seeing this, took his own life (<http://www.kgw.com/news/Clackamas-man-armed-confronts-mall-shooter-183593571.html>).

That event happened before Newtown. Perhaps Lanza chose Sandy Hook Elementary School as

his target because he knew there would not be an armed citizen there?

In summary, I urge you to resist the knee-jerk reaction of "getting tough on guns" and urge you instead to show the voters of this state you are serious about protecting our children, and all of us, by taking the steps outlined above.

A concerned citizen,
Chad Nehrt
222 Harrison Rd
Cheshire