

There is nothing more fundamental to the preservation of liberty than the ability to defend oneself. The framers of our Constitution wisely ensured through the Second Amendment that we would have the means to keep our government in check. If our right to keep and bear arms is any further infringed upon, we shall be rendered utterly powerless. We are on the verge of witnessing the removal of the only obstacle standing between a free society and tyranny. We must ensure that reason, not the raw emotion of tragic events, prevails. For under the guise of supposed security, our rights as American citizens could be lost, and may never be reclaimed.

The objective at the heart of the recent onslaught of proposed gun-control legislation is not decreased violence at all. In fact, history has taught us quite the opposite. For example, despite having the most restrictive gun control laws in the nation, cities such as Washington, D.C. and Chicago are not safer, but rather, are the most dangerous. The simple reason behind this is that by definition, criminals have no scruples when it comes to breaking laws. They are emboldened by the knowledge that disarmed law-abiding people are defenseless, and they act upon it. Similarly, governments can also take advantage of that state of helplessness.

The vast majority of gun owners are responsible, conscientious people. They value the role firearms play not only in our civil liberty and personal safety, but in our cultural heritage as well. Marksmanship and hunting are sports that are deeply rooted in our American history. Connecticut has an especially strong connection with firearms, as it is home to several gun manufacturers that craft quality products while providing many local jobs in the midst of a struggling economy. Learning to make and use firearms for constructive pursuits is a time-honored tradition that has been passed down through families for generations. Our identity as Americans is inextricably linked to the revolutionary belief that we should all share in the privileges and duties historically allowed only to a select few in power. Gun owners as a group should not be penalized for the offenses of the scant minority who would abuse this position.

Violence is inherent to human nature; guns, knives, chemicals and other tools that can be used as weapons, simply provide ways to execute that impulse. Removing guns from society does not reduce crime or attenuate the tendency of people to commit violent acts. However, the contemporary attitude towards violence, fostered by our frequent exposure to it through media and entertainment, in ever-higher doses, needs to be addressed. As human beings, we tend to opt for quick solutions to complex problems, rather than examining ourselves candidly. The truth is, guns are not, and never have been the issue at the core of this debate. Violence itself is the problem, and while we may be able to discourage it to some extent by raising awareness, and deter it by imposing consequences, our last line of defense remains the ability to fight back.