

Public Hearing Date: Monday, January 28th, 2013

Committee: Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

Location: Legislative Office Building Room 2C

RE: Gun Violence in CT and proposed new Anti-Gun legislation:

Dear Committee members;

I am writing to you today to state my strong opposition to the numerous draconian gun bills being proposed by many in the CT State legislator as an answer to the recent tragedy that took place here in Newtown. As a Connecticut resident, a father of two girls, and a husband, I am deeply disturbed by what happened on that day, but I know that the solution to such violence will not be found in enacting the gun control measures that are being proposed. As you know, Connecticut already has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation and that fact did very little to prevent this tragedy. Further banning of certain types of rifles, pistols, magazines and taxing bullets are wholly unnecessary measures that will do nothing to curb the amount or severity of violence in Connecticut. As we have seen far too often, deranged Individuals, do not care about the laws and will always find the means to carry out their actions regardless of what is or is not against the law.

As a concerned citizen I am not suggesting no reform is necessary on the gun topic and I believe most citizens will get behind reasonable steps like the tightening of background checks and providing law enforcement greater access to mental health information as part of that process. Enhanced school security measures, resource officers and class room education on emergency procedure are all other areas that can be improved upon and should be considered.

I am very concerned and troubled that as a result of this horrible tragedy many of our elected representatives and officials are choosing to focus on the politically opportunistic antigun agenda when we could be leading the fight both locally and nationally to tackle our broken mental health system which was at the core of this senseless act. Out of the roughly thirty current proposals being considered, none of them could/would deter future criminals or mentally unstable people from perpetrating these kinds of acts from happening again. In fact there isn't on recommendation on the table that even attempts to look at this area. The fact of the matter is that the antigun proposals are nothing more than feel good bills that will do nothing to protect our children from future harm. I ask this committee to focus on fixing the real problem so we are not faced with another mentally unstable person with the ability to cause harm to his/her fellow citizens.

The further demonization and pursuit of measures to ban semi-automatic rifles like the AR15 are not only ineffective as they statistically account for a very, very small percentage of gun violence (less than 2% used in committing crime and .012% resulting in death in 2011) but will more than likely meet strong legal challenges and possibly be deemed unconstitutional if passed. As the recent Heller case as proven the court said you are not allowed to ban any class of weapon that is in common use for the lawful purpose of self- defense. I am sure you are all aware the AR15 is the number one selling sporting rifle in the US and therefore in my opinion will most likely meet the "*overwhelmingly chosen for the lawful purpose of self-defense*" criteria" set forth in the Heller decision therefore striking down any attempt to ban them. Please do not waste your time, the citizen's

money and the states already taxed resources proposing and supporting any of these ineffective bills which will ultimately end up in the courts. Furthermore the enactment of many of these bills will further strangle our struggling economy resulting in the loss of hundreds of good paying jobs that the firearms and supporting industries have brought to our state.

The last point I would like to make is as good as our law enforcement officials are it is unreasonable to expect that they can protect the entire citizenry from the criminal and mentally ill people that live in our communities. As we have seen far too often the police are more often than not a reactionary force to a situation that has already gone out of control. Law enforcement can't be everywhere and even when they are alerted on average it takes them 5 – 10 minutes to arrive on scene or even longer in remote areas. That is an eternity when you are faced with one or more attackers trying to do you and your family harm. These types of situation happen hundreds of times a year and the difference between life and death often comes down to someone being able to fend off the attacker or attackers with the types of firearms that are equipped with multiple round magazines that are being demonized. Further disarming or limiting our ability from having a fighting chance to defend ourselves and our families will only create more victims rather than prevent criminals from perpetrating these kinds of acts.

In closing as a citizen of Connecticut for over 45 years and a voting constituent, as well as someone who has never been politically active, I ask you to do the right thing and address the real cause of these acts and the people who commit them. Please do not support the knee jerk reaction to do something, anything rather than taking some time to do the right thing. We need our elected officials to focus on solving the real problems not their own agendas. It is what's best for this state, the nation and best for their future representative career. Today there are over 180,000 and growing by the day registered active pistol permit holders, 56,000 hunting licenses and many more private citizens who own firearms for legal purposes in the state. We are all paying attention and plan to do what it takes to fight for our constitutional rights if that is what this comes down to. I for one will do everything in my power to oppose any elected official who continues to pursue legislation that fails to address the real issue and further infringes on any of our constitutional rights under the guise of protecting our children. Please stand with us and support our ability to protect our families and our rights as law abiding citizens of the State of Connecticut. Thank You

Chip Cifone,
Burlington, CT.