

Testimony for the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

I **oppose** any restrictions on gun ownership in Connecticut, including bans on firearm types or features, or limits on ammunition capacity.

I'm 30 years old, and I have lived in Connecticut for my entire life. I'm Catholic. I have an MBA from UConn, and a professional career at a Hartford-based Fortune 500 company. I am also a gun owner.

I firmly believe that all people have a natural right to defend themselves against violent aggression. Both the US and Connecticut Constitutions recognize this natural right with language protecting a citizen's right to bear arms.

Those who claim that semi-automatic rifles or handguns with large capacity magazines have no legitimate defensive purpose should consider why law enforcement officers carry such weapons. Surely our police officers are not criminals. And we can reasonably believe that they know the best tools for their jobs. And yet, I bet that no law enforcement agency would willingly give up their AR-15 rifles or 15-round pistol magazines. The hypocrisy of law enforcement demanding exemption from the law is currently on display in New York, where the head of NYPD's detective union at once applauds gun control for average citizens, but decries the same restrictions for "retired police officers" (ie: average citizens) as endangering public safety: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/17/ny-gun-control-laws-anger-police-retired_n_2495417.html.

As a competitive shooter I know that hitting a target under stress is difficult. Any defensive situation is bound to be stressful. The loser in a gunfight is most likely to be the one who runs out of ammunition first. And yet, there are many who propose to ban the most effective defensive tools available under the guise of making people safer. In fact, such restrictions would have the opposite effect.

Connecticut citizens must not allow themselves to be misled into giving up their right to own guns by the occasional acts of deranged individuals, or the entirely avoidable tragedies that accompany gun ownership, such as a child finding his way to a loaded gun and pulling the trigger. On the basis of such a standard, people would also have to give up driving to avoid the deaths and injuries that often accompany car accidents. What must always be kept in mind is the incomparably greater potential danger of untold numbers of children losing their parents and their own lives to criminals or government-employed murderers unleashed on a disarmed population. Though unlikely in 2013 America, a quick overview of the past 100 years of world history provides countless examples of tyrants murdering their own citizens. We only need to look at the treatment of Native Americans as recently as the late 19th century for examples in the USA (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wounded_Knee_Massacre).

I urge you to oppose any attempts to disarm the citizens of Connecticut.

Thank you,
Christopher L. Beaulieu