

To the members of the committee,

Being a lifelong Connecticut resident, I was appalled at the tragedy of the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary School, in Newtown, CT. My thoughts and prayers have gone out each day to the families and victims of the horrific events of that day. No family or community should ever be subjected to the violence that was committed by a mentally deranged individual, bent on causing evil acts.

As a gun owner and lifelong shooter and sportsman, I am concerned at the many bills that are being proposed in the legislature this session. The vast majority of these bills infringe on the rights granted to me and my fellow citizens by the Constitution of the United States of America, and the Constitution of the State of Connecticut. These rights are guaranteed to citizens in the defense of themselves, their state, and their country. I strongly oppose any attempts to limit the type of gun I may possess. I strongly oppose any attempts to limit the capacity of a magazine that a gun may use. I strongly oppose any attempts at taxation and requirements of liability insurance for gun owners. As a law abiding citizen of Connecticut, I am fearful that the acts of one evil person, will affect the lives of peaceable people who have done nothing wrong.

People choose to arm themselves for many reasons, not the least of which is self-defense. In recognition of that fact, a semi-automatic rifle, is one of the best choices an individual can make to defend himself or his family from a criminal. In particular, a semi-automatic AR-15, with a normal capacity magazine of thirty rounds, is capable of providing a formidable defense from a variety of threats. People choose to have this type of weapon for its ease of use and ability to operate. In many documented cases, lives have been saved by men and women using this type of rifle. Also, in performance of their duties, many people in law enforcement employ an AR-15 because of these same reasons. Police and citizens are like minded in this mindset: we both face the same types of threats, hence the reason why citizens and law enforcement arm themselves with the same weapons. Additionally, many handguns are of semi-automatic operation and include normal capacity magazine of twelve to fifteen rounds. Here as well people and law enforcement choose to arm themselves with these firearms because of the qualities listed above.

Many of the laws being proposed only put a further burden on the law abiding citizen. People who criminally possess firearms do not care about rights or laws that the State has put forth. I strongly support the efforts of the legislature to strengthen the statewide gun trafficking task force. I also support the efforts of the legislature to strengthen laws concerning criminal use of a firearm and in the areas of gang crime and gang activity. All of these common sense proposals will only help in preventing gun violence and not further infringe on the rights of the citizens.

I also support the efforts of the legislature in the areas of mental health, specifically in the area of preventing individuals who have a clinically proven, psychiatric or psychological disorder, from obtaining firearms. I believe that this should be the primary focus of the State. There are many ways that the State can help protect its citizens in the area of mental health. In recent events, it seems that the individuals who commit these horrific crimes also had a history of mental instability that was known to either the State or other individuals. In most cases the information was withheld due to privacy concerns or was not taken seriously by an authority. Laws should be

enacted to protect those individuals right to privacy while also allowing authorities to get and utilize the information and to help the affected individual and protect the citizen.

In closing, I believe that the legislature has a duty to protect the Constitution of the State of Connecticut, the Constitution of the United States and the rights guaranteed to the citizens in those documents. The people of Connecticut deserve better than the "knee-jerk", reaction, that some of the proposed bills imply. I urge this committee and the legislature to act responsibly and carefully, in consideration of the rights of the citizens. To do any less would be a dis-service to the men and women who have fought and died for their country and state, it would be a dis-service to the peaceable citizens who reside here now, and it would be a dis-service to future generations who have yet to be heard.

Submitted respectfully,

Christopher Tehan
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