

Good Afternoon,

First I want to thank you for taking the time to listen to the testimony of the many citizens who took time to be here today. My name is Christopher Yen and I am a resident of Norwalk, CT. I moved to Connecticut 4 years ago after graduating from Harvard University with a degree in Applied Mathematics and am currently employed by one of the many hedge funds that dot the gold coast of this state.

I wanted to take a moment to talk about common sense. It's a word that gets used a lot when discussing gun policy, and a standard I think we have to uphold as we explore how we can make our state safer. Merriam Webster defines common sense as "sound and prudent judgment based on a simple perception of the situation or facts."

Simple perception of the situation or facts.

I'm sure you have heard and will continue to hear a lot of facts from both sides. However, I'm a simple person, and don't really have a head for all these facts and figures. So I'll just apply some common sense.

Common sense tells me that trying something twice expecting different results is pointless. Yet here we are considering tighter assault weapons bans and bans on standard capacity magazines. As we've already been reminded, these ideas have been tried before at the federal level from 1994 to 2004. I know the CDC and Justice Department have both done studies concluding that the bans were ineffective. However, for me, the simple perception is that these laws simply didn't prevent mass shootings. Columbine, CT lottery, the bans did nothing to stop them. To me, simple perception is that these laws don't work. They failed to save a single life, and wasted millions of dollars and legislative effort. Moreover, its worth noting that at Virginia tech, one of the worst tragedies, no rifles were used, and he used handguns with a capacity of 10 rounds. The Hartford courant reported that Lanza was able to change magazines multiple times during his crime. Clearly, these laws will solve nothing. That is common sense.

Common sense tells me that, in order to prevent an event from happening twice, we should focus on the facts of the event. What does taxing ammunition and banning its online sale have to do with preventing tragedies. What does forcing gun owners to register their weapons have to do with preventing tragedies such as this? May I remind you that Canada recently scrapped its long gun registry because it was extremely costly and didn't help solve or prevent a single crime. Common sense would seem to indicate our state monies are better spent elsewhere, for example, better gun storage laws, and better mental health checks for gun buyers.

Common sense also tells me that, when I am not an expert, I should defer to the experts. Much of what is being proposed is similar to what was already forcibly passed in New York State. Here is what the NY Sherriff's association, undisputable experts on public safety and crime, had to say about their state's new assault weapons ban this after meeting this Friday.

*"We believe that the new definition is too broad, and prevents the possession of many weapons that are legitimately used for hunting, target shooting and self-defense. Classifying firearms as assault weapons because of one arbitrary feature effectively deprives people the right to possess firearms which have never before been designated as assault weapons. We, as Sheriff's are convinced that only law abiding gun owners will be affected by these new provisions, while criminals will still have and use whatever weapons they want. "*

And about new magazine restrictions:

*"The new law enacts reductions in the maximum capacity of gun magazine. As Sheriffs, we believe based on our years of law enforcement experience that this will not reduce gun violence. The new law will unfairly limit the ability of law abiding citizens to purchase firearms in New York. It bears repeating that it is our belief that the reduction of magazine capacity will not make New Yorkers or our communities safer."*

It seems pretty clear to me, that a lot of solutions being discussed fail the basic common sense test. Rather, they are the same silly proposals that are recycled every time a tragedy strikes. We have tried these ideas and they have failed. It's time for us to examine the facts and see what can be done. Personally, I would like to see this council propose better storage laws, especially for households with minors. I would like to see better coordination between law enforcement and the mental health services. I would like to see stronger background checks for purchasing a weapon.

But make no mistake. **If your goal is to prevent these awful things from happening and you believe magazine bans or limits on modern sporting rifles are the answer, your belief is empirically denied.** Persisting in this belief can only be justified by an irrational fear and ignorance or unwillingness to accept simple observation (a rather nasty thing we call prejudice). You cannot justify policies of this nature in the name of public welfare, facts, or common sense, but only in the name of politics. More than that, it flies in the face of the most basic of standards: common sense. There is so much good this committee and can do, do not squander this opportunity by passing the same political talking points that we all know will do nothing to make us safer. We the people of CT deserve better. Those children who are now lost to use deserve better.

Thank you for your time.