

All members of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group,

I would like to thank you in advance for taking the time to read my testimony.

My name is Claire Wong-Ostapowicz, I live at 54 Parker Farms Road, Wallingford Connecticut and I will be 52 years young next month.

I support efforts to educate the community are large, including children, on firearm safety, the requirement that all firearms owners complete safety education and training prior to being allowed to use or own a firearm. We do this for anyone who wants to operate a motor vehicle, both of which when operated inappropriately can have fatal consequences. I support regulations that prevent the transfer of firearms to unlicensed individuals; proper defensive posturing and when or if necessary, overwhelming force as the best method of insuring the safety of the public as well as supporting the development of coping skills for young people. This seem to be underlying factor for violence which is a mental health issue and not an implement issue.

Please know and understand I reject bans on weapons based on type, features, loading device limits and the type of ammunition. I also reject efforts to limit access to arms and ammunition, including the taxation of these items. Currently the average person is already experiencing difficulty purchasing these items due to their costs. Implementing more taxes only serves to limit access to firearms to the wealthy rather than all citizens as is written in the second amendment. Each of these restrictions are a clear infringement of my second amendment rights as well as the overwhelming majority of law abiding firearm owners. Such bans do not consider those willing to commit violent actions, they will still find a way to acquire them.

Bans on semi-automatic rifles, which include the AR (Armalite) style rifles, will disrupt the power between the people and the government, which is written in the second amendment. Rifles account for an extremely low percentage, 2.5%, of firearms murders nationwide. Alcohol kills 30 times more Americans and those visiting the US by way of drunken drivers.

The AR style rifle looks the way it does because of our armed forces. They had the wisdom to realize that this rifle is easy to use and to teach its user how to care for it. With so many of our military personnel on deployment, if anything were to happen on U.S. soil, We The People are prepared to protect her.

Everyone I know of would like to come up with a working solution to ending the horrific undertakings of another Adam Lanza. Limiting good people to 10, 7, or 1 round in their legal weapon is not the answer. Do I have the answer? No, but I have theories to a good discussion that could lead to the answer, as do hundreds of other law abiding citizens. That discussion begins with eliminating "gun free" zones. Starting with schools, if legal gun owners were able to be armed picking up their children, attending school activities, or teachers and school staff able to be armed, it would send a clear

message to the lunatics preying on them that “Connecticut has had enough and will not tolerate any more senseless acts against our children”! These psychopaths are looking for the easiest route, by sending this message, that route is now blocked. Instead of going after our children, they may instead take their own life.

Of course there would have to be provisions like carrying concealed only or choosing who or how many teachers and staff would be armed, but as I mentioned, it is the beginning of a discussion, one that, if voted on, would get the vast majority for approval.

There are a few excellent sources here in Connecticut that would gladly sit down with law makers and come up with sensible approaches to the issues at hand. Groups and people that follow, study, and keep up with Connecticut laws for firearms and have the whole state in mind when doing so. Being a firearm owner, we do not only think about ourselves and “how and why are we being targeted now” (but the thought does come up), we also think of everyone around us whether they carry a weapon or not. We are folks who care about other people. We have served our country, the community; we may bag your groceries, be your co-worker, and yes, teach your children. Most of all, we respect each other and everyone in general enough to want to protect our families and loved ones should the need arise. I personally, would do everything in my power to protect yours as well. I feel it would be my duty as a legal permit holder to defend any person, should they be in imminent life threatening danger, and to do something about it. Many folks feel the same way.

I urge you, the task force, to think clearly about the effects these new proposals will do to our state and the law abiding citizens within if passed. The criminals are going to be criminals with, or without these new laws, restricting our legal rights only gives them their permit to continue.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Claire Wong-Ostapowicz