

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to speak here today. I understand that with the tragedy in Newtown we are obligated to have a discussion on whether there is a way to prevent this in the future. But I think some in this room are using this opportunity to limit our second amendment rights simply because of their personal belief on guns. Unfortunately, unlike the first amendment, not everyone has exercised their second amendment rights and do not plan to. And for those who don't it is very easy to dismiss anything that takes away those rights from others. But millions of us take the second amendment just as seriously as the first, because we recognize that without the second the first becomes extremely vulnerable.

So since I think that most of us agree that the first amendment is absolutely crucial to our freedom I thought I would reference it while I discuss some of the legislative proposals I've heard. Free speech has also cause tragedy when misused by evil hearted people. So because of the actions of a few lets propose these regulations on free speech:

- 1) Limit speech to 10 words at a time in order to prevent the chance of inciting violence
- 2) Require speech liability insurance in case your speech causes someone to inflict harm to themselves such as suicide
- 3) Ban free speech on the internet
- 4) Instate a 50% sales tax on purchasing books and other media
- 5) Ban free speech based on its presentation rather than its content
- 6) Confiscate written materials that are not approved by the state
- 7) Deny free speech rights if convicted of a dui

These ideas when applied to free speech do not sound very reasonable and common sense do they? Well for those of us who take our gun rights very seriously this is what we are hearing from you. If you were standing here as I am looking at a group of other citizens, who have taken an oath to uphold the constitution and protect our rights, discussing amongst each other how far they think they can go in taking your free speech rights away. You would ask yourself how they have that power over your rights that are not supposed to be infringed.

You see we regulate the second amendment way more than we do the first already. Gun owners are reasonable people and we accept that there has to be limitations on this right. We accept that we cannot have automatic weapons, a bomb, a grenade launcher, etc. We accept that we have to be responsible in our lives in other ways or we can lose our right to bear arms, as criminals do not lose their free speech rights. But we draw the line when we hear these kinds of draconian and unnecessary legislative proposals. What you have labeled as an assault weapon is no different than the vast majority of firearms on the market. They fire at the same rate as every other semi-automatic and fire a bullet that is less than half the size of the most commonly used hunting cartridges that would remain on the market. These assault weapons are being targeted simply because the way they look makes it easy to scare people who are uninformed. And if the ban is allowed and accepted it opens the door to ban every other gun on the market that operates in the same exact way, which includes handguns most commonly

used in personal defense. Focus on the criminals. Toughen penalties for straw purchasers who buy guns for those who are not allowed to possess one. Increase jail time for criminals who use a gun in the commission of a crime or for those who are caught with an illegal weapon. Focus on the criminals but don't turn the law abiding into criminals. Keep in mind that we are not taking away everyone's free speech rights in order to address the bullying problem in schools. We are addressing the actual bully.

I hope you understand now how these proposals are not so common sense and reasonable sounding. But I would like to end with some statistics that I believe hold the answer in this discussion. The weapons that you want to ban are mostly rifles. Well according to FBI crime stats in 2011 all rifles, not just assault rifles, accounted for 323 homicides. In fact the same year 728 people were killed by personal weapons defined as hands, fists, feet, etc. So how is banning these guns going to make the slightest difference? But did you know suicide was the number ten cause of death according to the CDC in 2010. This number was nearly 40,000 people. The tragedy in Newtown, aurora movie theater, columbine and we can go down the list, were committed by individuals who had very deep mental issues. In fact more than 600,000 emergency visits in 2010 were from self-inflicted wounds such as suicide attempts. We have a very serious mental health issue in this country and we are sitting here talking about taking away the rights of your law-abiding constituents and focusing on a weapons ban that will not save a single life in this state.

Do you want your time as a legislator to be spent finding ways to take law-abiding citizens rights away or do you want a legacy of truly doing something worthwhile that can actually lead to saving the lives of millions over time.

I thank you all again for your time and allowing us to speak. I do hope that you take your role as representatives seriously and do not allow your personal biases to get in the way of addressing the root of the issue which is mental health.