

To the Members of the Committee,

I strongly support a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines in Connecticut and nationally. Access to these weapons and forms of ammunition annually results in unnecessary deaths and – apparently – inspires and facilitates further acts of violence. The lives lost are not recoverable. The harm inflicted is not justifiable.

The collective events of gun violence: Columbine, Virginia Tech, Aurora, Sandy Hook – to name just a few – shock and horrify us. We should be shocked and horrified by these events. And by the countless incidents of individual gun violence that daily claim or otherwise destroy lives. But, as the steady stream of incidents show, it is not enough to be shocked and horrified. It is not enough to mourn and lament. We must step up and take action now to limit and prevent further acts of gun violence.

There are no perfect solutions. Banning assault weapons and high capacity magazines is a start. Assault weapons facilitate criminal acts of violence. These are not ‘recreational’ guns unless the ‘recreation’ is killing or maiming multiple victims at a clip. We cannot and should not tolerate continued access to these weapons.

Our constitutional rights are not without limitation. It is time that the balance tipped in favor of our rights to live unmolested by the threat (and reality) of gun violence in our homes, in our streets, in our neighborhoods, in our schools, in our restaurants, in our movie theaters, in our shopping centers...

In the wake of a shooting there is the ultimate return to rhetoric. The immediacy, the pain, the blood and gristle and trauma of the event are subsumed by old, hoary arguments pro and con over guns and gun control. Do not let that happen here. Do not let words and arguments and partisan interests block out the horror of the slaughter on December 14, 2012 and days like it.

I live in Sandy Hook. My six-year old would have been in first grade at Sandy Hook Elementary on December 14 if we had not kept her in private school this year. When I imagine that – and when I imagine the events of December 14 – my mind goes to a very dark place. I think of young children, my daughter’s age, facing a threatening, black-clad stranger armed with a gun. I think of them – small, frightened, separated from their parents – hearing the pop-popping sound of bullets being fired; hearing screaming; seeing their classmates and teachers felled, bloodied and mangled. I think of the smell of vomit and urine that must have surrounded them in their last moments. I think of the pain and suffering they experienced when the bullets tore into their small bodies. I think of how trusting small children are – and how terribly betrayed they were that day. I think of the unbearable agony of the parents and families. My mind goes there and so should yours. This is what we are talking about when we talk about gun control and banning assault weapons.

I urge you to take action to ban military / assault style weapons and high capacity magazines in Connecticut. The time to act is now.

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