

Members of the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety,

I am a sportsman, target shooter and gun owner and I am opposed to any additional gun control measures. The ideas currently being proposed by members of the legislature are a direct attack upon my rights as a citizen of Connecticut. More importantly, I have not heard a single proposal that would have stopped the murders that occurred in Newtown on December 14, 2012. Several of the proposals are particularly troubling to me as they would do nothing to reduce crime while significantly inhibiting gun ownership, the shooting sports and the ability of individuals to defend themselves.

I have heard numerous false statements by the supporters of the gun control movement regarding modern sporting rifles, which they have termed "assault weapons". The first statement, that the AR-15 type modern sporting rifle used in the Newtown murders is somehow more powerful than other guns, shows a fundamental misunderstanding or ignorance of the issues. The AR-15 type weapon functions like all other semi-automatic guns, one pull of the trigger for each bullet fired. The AR-15 (when chambered in its most popular caliber, the .223) uses a bullet far smaller than those found in typical hunting rifles. The pistol grip and adjustable stock features do nothing to affect the lethality of the weapon, instead only allow the user to adjust the gun to better fit his or her body.

It has been argued that these guns are "killing machines" and have no legitimate purpose in the hands of private citizens. This argument ignores the fact that millions of modern sporting rifles are owned across the country. If the only purpose of these guns was to commit mass murder why would they be so popular? In contrast to what many gun control supporters espouse, modern sporting rifles are some of the most popular guns used for target shooting due to their accuracy, adaptability and economy to shoot. These rifles are also a very effective gun for home defense, a fact supported by the adoption of these weapons by many police departments (albeit in their fully automatic counterparts).

Magazine capacity limitations have been suggested as a quick and easy "commonsense" solution to reducing violence. I submit that limiting magazine capacity will do nothing to but create easier targets for criminals. Criminals have the luxury of planning their crimes; they commit their crimes in gun free zones where they encounter no effective resistance. Reloading a magazine takes less than two seconds, and reloading is not even required if a criminal simply brings more than one gun. However, limited magazine capacity will affect people who are defending themselves, possibly from multiple attackers, as victims do not get to pick the time place and nature of how they are attacked. The legislature would not ask the police to reduce their magazine capacities, why should the citizens of Connecticut be forced to use less than effective weapons to defend themselves?

Even more troubling to me than the arbitrary bans on guns and magazine capacity limitations are the proposed restrictions on ammunition. Background checks and taxes for ammunition would only increase the price of recreational shooting and would not deter any criminal activity. As a recreational shooter, I shoot hundreds of rounds every week, between 15,000 and 20,000 rounds every year. Purchasing ammunition in bulk is the only practical way for me and most others to continue shooting, enacting limitations on the quantities that people can purchase will only harm sportsman. Criminals do not need thousands of rounds of ammunition to commit their crimes, and circumventing background

checks would not be difficult. We need only to look at the illegal drug market to realize that preventing a criminal from obtaining ammo will be impossible.

These are only some of the topics being discussed as part of the effort to legislate away criminal behavior by controlling inanimate objects. I would ask you that you look at the track record of gun control in places like Chicago and Washington DC before you enact any new laws in Connecticut. Gun control advocates in our state argue that more restrictive gun laws will result in lower crime rates. I submit to you that two of the most violent cities in our country had virtual total bans on gun ownership for decades. They had an effectively disarmed citizenry, yet their problems with violence persisted. What we have is a violence problem, not a gun problem. Connecticut has some of the strictest gun laws in the country, we need to enforce current laws not pass new ones. I hope you will oppose any new gun control efforts and most importantly, will not pass any legislation without first holding public hearings on every bill being considered.

Respectfully,

David Ballerini