

Public Hearing Date: Monday, January 28th, 2013
Committee: Gun Violence Prevention Working Group
Location: Legislative Office Building Room 2C
RE: Gun Violence in CT and proposed new Anti-Gun legislation:

I am a Newtown resident and father of two beautiful elementary school girls. The specter of gun violence is all too real to me. We have an absolute responsibility do everything that we can to prevent another tragedy like the one that just took place in Sandy Hook, and that is perpetuated on our streets on a daily basis. Gun violence has been ignored for far too long partly because it is usually not as shocking as 20 beautiful children being struck down at one time, but more importantly because in reality it is about money, special interest influence and commerce. Look at any poll and you will see that the majority, and in most cases overwhelming majority of people support universal background checks on both gun and ammunition purchases, eliminating high capacity magazines and a real assault weapons ban. It is time that our legislators started representing the will of the people who they represent and not the will of the NRA and other special interests. A silent majority who supports stronger gun laws has been awakened by the tragedy in Sandy Hook. We will no longer be silent and no longer tolerate our government bowing to the loud, well financed minority. We will hold our representatives accountable at the ballot box and they will now have to be concerned about doing the right thing as opposed to the easy thing.

Many gun rights advocates cite the recent Heller Supreme Court Decision as guaranteeing an individual right to possess a firearm. This decision did just that and it is settled law, however what is conveniently left out of those arguments is that the court explicitly allows for there to be regulation as to the type of gun, who can own it and where it can be brought. I am a supporter of our 2nd Amendment rights, however nothing that is being proposed infringes upon those rights.

While I absolutely recognize someone's right to possess a gun for self defense, the reality that a home with a firearm is 2.7 times more likely to have a murder due to gun violence is not lost on me. The falsehood that a gun in the home makes you safer, while absolutely not a reason to take away anyone's right to do so, implores that we take a much closer look at who we do allow to possess a gun and make it as difficult as possible for someone who should not have a gun to get one. There will always be individual examples of where a gun makes someone more or less safe, but we must look at the preponderance of the evidence not individual accounts.

A final observation is the continuous argument that any regulation will only effect and punish law abiding citizens since criminals do not obey the law anyway. This flawed reasoning would then dictate that we have no laws governing any subject whatsoever since some will never follow them. Where does everyone think that weapons used in gun violence by criminals come from? At one time almost every gun was obtained through legal means(not necessarily with legal intentions) and then filtered down and changed hands so that people who can not legally own a gun now do. This simple fact screams out that we must do a much better job of

controlling who can purchase a gun and ammunition. We must do a better job of having a background check system that incorporates felons, domestic abusers, violent offenders and certain mental illnesses. We must eliminate the unchecked private sales and transfers that take place with no check or documentation. We must do everything that we can to eliminate straw purchasers.

For these reasons I fully support and recommend that you adopt the legislative proposals set forth by CT Against Gun Violence. Enacting new legislation to curb gun violence and make our state a safer place is not going to by itself solve this problem. We will have to take significant steps to help improve our mental health system as well as taking a hard look at our values as a society that help to perpetuate this cycle of violence. That said to not pass legislation because it will not solve everything is absurd and irresponsible.

Thank you for your efforts in dealing with these challenging issues.

Respectfully,
David Stowe
Newtown, CT