

Bipartisan Task Force On Gun Violence Prevention  
Gun Violence Prevention Working Group  
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Representatives and Senators on the Committee,

I am an executive member of the Connecticut Citizens Defense League and a certified firearms instructor. I have issues with the vast majority of proposed bills. I'll focus on a few key areas to keep my testimony as brief as possible.

### **“Assault Weapons” Legislation**

First a correction, 99% of the firearms affected by these laws are NOT “assault weapons”. They are simply semi-automatic rifles that have been in existence for over a century. The inner components function the same as any other hunting rifle, they may LOOK like military equipment, but are not the same. Some misconceptions include:

- Assault weapons are **NOT** easily modified to “select fire” or full automatic. One pull of the trigger, one round is fired. Specialized machinery and knowledge is needed to modify one of these firearms.
- They are not used in the vast majority of gun crime in CT or the nation. In fact, 2010 was the most recent year I found on the FBI website with one crime with a rifle (not sure if that was even an “assault” style rifle or not) in Connecticut.
- There are some “features” that are banned that have NO impact on crime, including:
  - **Bayonet Mount** – when was there a drive by bayoneting in CT? I would think NEVER and they offer a safe option for home defense. They are perfect for mounting a flashlight.
  - **Flash Hider** – similar shape, size and appearance as a “muzzle brake”. The only function is to reduce the “flash” when the firearm is in use. It doesn't even “hide” either, just reduces the already apparent flame signature.
  - **Pistol Grip** – This isn't entirely different from the conventional grip which historically was called a “pistol grip”. Slight angle difference of the dominant shooting hand, NO IMPACT on overall function.
  - **Telescopic Stock** – This is actually a SAFETY FEATURE. As an instructor, I can tell you proper rifle fit makes shooting safer. Further, when I teach a shooting class, I need to transport six rifles when one would do just fine. Not exactly good should something happen if my car is broken into as I set up a class. Would our legislators and citizens prefer one rifle was in the streets or six?
  - **Magazine Capacity** – 30 rounds is STANDARD, not “high capacity”. If Adam Lanza was shooting with more 10 round magazines it would have NO impact on target acquisition or effectiveness. I ran a test (ten times) and did an average of all ten drills. Shooting with 3, 10 round magazines and one 30 round magazine. Two targets, 15 feet apart, 40 feet distance

“down range”. Accuracy was identical with 10 rounds vs 30 rounds. The average time difference for the same 30 rounds? .45 seconds. Less than half of a second. Focusing on magazine capacity for pistols and rifles may attract headlines, but it has ZERO impact on reducing ANY crime.

- **“Assault Weapons”**, as improperly defined by state and federal law are already illegal. The only way to obtain one legally is with further federal and local investigation and an additional tax fee of \$200. and backlog of over six months to obtain. A criminal couldn't get one legally if he tried. How does this benefit crime reduction?

Simply put, this legislation only empowers criminals and weakens law abiding citizens (especially those that use the firearms for self defense).

### **Magazine Capacity**

As mentioned above, standard capacity magazines have no impact on reducing crime. There is a problem when a law abiding citizen has to follow the law, but a criminal does not. The problem in self defense is “heightened nerves” and “fight or flight” mechanisms in the human brain. The criminal is calmer as they are the aggressor (by nature). The person fearing for their life has a much higher chance of failure to feed a magazine into a pistol while trying to defend themselves.

The criminal by nature, does not fear magazine regulations as they simply will not comply. Law enforcement will be exempt from this legislation. Why do they have firearms? Purely for self defense and not the protection of the average citizen. Why should police officers be able to defend themselves with a standard capacity magazine and a citizen only have a neutered 10 round magazine? Isn't the average citizen's life just as valuable as that officer?

Response time for law enforcement in a home invasion is simply too long and citizens need their right to defend themselves. CT's state constitution grants us this right – "Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state", Article 1: Section 15, CT Constitution

In *Castle Rock v. Gonzales*, 545 U.S. 748 (2005), the Supreme Court case ruled that law enforcement has NO LEGAL obligation to protect citizens. In this case, Castle Rock (CO) was not legally liable to protect a citizen. “To protect and serve” looks good on a police cruiser, but I am responsible for my safety both legally and practically.

### **Required Insurance**

This is just not feasible. You can only get this type of insurance under VERY rare circumstances. Even if you are lucky enough to get a policy, it DOES NOT cover criminal acts committed with a firearm. For example, you can't burn your house down and then file a claim for the value of the home. Firearms insurance is no different.

### **Increased Taxes on Firearms, Accessories and Ammunition**

Taxing firearms, accessories and ammunition is not only constitutionally questionable, but a barrier to those that are on fixed income (especially in urban neighborhoods). Law abiding citizens simply wanting to protect their families should not choose between family safety or

being a victim. Why should only the middle class and wealthier citizens be able to afford to protect their families?

This is a prime case for judicial interpretation. Chicago has learned the hard way (twice) in the last three years and paid nearly half a million dollars in legal fees (to the citizens legal defense) for cases they have lost in litigation. This doesn't count the cost of the city's own legal fees. In this economy, I can hardly think Connecticut can afford to mount such a legal battle.

### **Gun Offender and Long Gun Registries**

Canada had a "long gun" registry – not a single crime was solved. Supposed to cost 2 million dollars and ballooned to hundreds of millions. Exponential waste with ZERO to show for it, is this something Connecticut can afford?

Neither of these have been proven to work. I can applaud legislators for finally addressing criminals and firearms crime, but there is already a Supreme Court ruling on such registries.

Haynes v. United States, 390 U.S. 85. The National Firearms Act of 1934 required the registration of certain types of firearms. Miles Edward Haynes was a convicted felon who was charged with failing to register a firearm under the Act. Haynes argued that, because he was a convicted felon and thus prohibited from owning a firearm, requiring him to register was essentially requiring him to make an open admission to the government that he was in violation of the law, which was thus a violation of his right not to incriminate himself. The court ruled 7-1 in Haynes' favor.

I cannot support any registry for law abiding citizens. Like publishing a gun owners name in the media, registries for law abiding citizens are akin to treating a citizen like a criminal of the worst kind, a sex offender. There is ZERO value that can come of any time of registry.

### **Gun Control simply doesn't reduce crime**

During our federal ban, crime was on the decline when the "assault weapons ban" (AWB) took effect. During the ten years it continued to decline. After the ban, crime CONTINUED to fall and there were exponentially more firearms and accessories purchased. EVERY YEAR, gun ownership went up, crime went down. So much that an entire study was done by an economist John Lott in his book "More Guns, Less Crime". His book was recently updated and continued to show decline (currently in its third edition). Mr. Lott isn't an avid shooter, simply a "numbers" geek that exposed flaws in modern misconceptions in gun control data gathering.

### **Closing Remarks**

I am a single father of a fifteen year old son, my mother is handicapped but has a permit. I study data involving criminal and lawful use of firearms in my occupation as a firearms instructor. I enjoy shooting with my family and teaching people how to shoot. We are shooters. Adam Lanza was not, he was a murderer and should be labeled as such.

If you would like to have meaningful dialogue on how to reduce crime, our organization is available to assist in that conversation. I am willing to participate as an instructor.

I have an open offer to any legislator that would like to understand how firearms function and are used including range time. Please take me up on this offer so questions can be answered in a "hands on" manner rather than repeating the most often wrong information on firearms use.

I am available to answer any questions and can be reached at my email address below:

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