

Please accept this as my testimony for the task force public hearing for January 28th in lieu of my attending.

The un-imaginable, murderous actions of a presumed mentally ill man on December 14th have caused great grief, fear and outrage to many in our communities, state and across the country, resulting in the call for change.

One focus is the need to improve physical infrastructure and the procedures and policies as it pertains to the safety and security of our children at our schools. Another focus is to re-evaluate our current mental health laws and services, and lastly; a focus on current gun laws. Unfortunately, some have also seized on this event to promote their personal cause, beliefs and agenda by purposing radical changes to the laws that would greatly infringe on Constitutional rights (both U.S. and CT Constitutions), that would do nothing to protect "The People" or reduce the risk of another senseless tragedy. My hope is you will be able to see through all the personal grandstanding which does nothing to further the cause of safety and focus on what will actually work.

It's a fact that in an unsecured, undefended venue, an active shooter, free of obstacles or opposition is capable of causing a high causality count regardless of "type of firearm" or "magazine capacity". This statement highlights two examples of proposed laws which would have made no difference at all on December 14th.

The fact is, if Adam had gone in with knives, clubs or bombs, being free of obstacles or opposition, he still would have been able to slaughter those children. **It wasn't the gun(s) that took those lives that day, it was Adam.**

I must also ask you to keep in mind statistical probabilities to balance against the decisions/ actions you are about to take. The chance that, on any given day, another mentally ill young man dressed for combat, with a sound knowledge of the firearms and the skills to use them, will have free access to steal firearms, and hundreds of rounds ammo and then randomly commit mass murder of women and children is extremely low. Statistically the frequency of such an event is so rare it is immeasurable compared to a statistic example of there being one death every 48 minutes by drunk drivers. The future of our right to own several different types of automobiles has never been brought into question, nor has anyone ever had to surrender their car because his neighbor killed someone with their car. Please keep this in mind.

Finally, I reference the NRA statements that if an armed intruder does get in, no firearms laws you construct will mean a thing! The only effective countermeasure at that moment is the use of defensive weapons which can include a spectrum of devices which include pepper spray, electronic devices, and firearms.

The 2nd Amendment is often not explained quite this way, but I ask you to consider: In the 1700's, common legal writings offered a preamble to explain a motive for what follows, then followed by the core legal statement. The "We The People" preamble sets the stage for what follows, but the core IS what follows. The preamble is an introduction, a "scene setter".

The right guaranteed by the second amendment is the Right of the people to keep and bear arms. That's all of it. Not bound by anything more, that's the Right not to be infringed. Arms means a firearm, ammunition and an ammunition store combined

(sidearm, magazine and cartridges in today's language). One reason, and not necessarily the only reason to express the need for that Right is to maintain a working and coordinated militia of the people. Nothing in the preamble conditions the actual Right granted. In D.C. v Heller, that Right was affirmed to be an individual Right. In the Connecticut Constitution, Article first, section 15 it's even more straightforward: "SEC. 15. Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state."

There is no preconditioning of that right for EVERY CITIZEN! So, in terms of citizens who comprise school staff, may I ask you each to answer this question, "why laws subordinate to the "Supreme Law of the Land" and the Connecticut Constitution deny the rights of those citizens to keep and bear arms in defense of their classroom?" I respectfully will offer this speculative observation:

What if Victoria Soto had something more than her bare hands to defend herself and the school? People may have still died, but most likely the toll would have been far less. (Lanza may have been shot or ran off thus, fewer victims would have perished).

The mere fact that we have made such places "Gun Free" zones, simply makes these places proverbial shooting galleries for such unchallenged twisted murderers as Lanza and Holmes

I trust you can reduce the risk; I hope you will focus solely on what measures are truly effective, and disregard what's not.

Ed Hawkins