

Dear members of the Bi-Partisan committee,

Thank you for serving on this critically important committee and for collecting input from your constituents on the issues of gun violence. Despite its political sensitivity, I believe that it is a central issue for restoring the sanity, safety and freedom from fear for families and our children.

Like many of the parents who have testified over the past weeks in public hearings, **I too strongly support more stringent background checks and regulation on gun ownership, and a total ban on assault weapons.** I feel that it is a gross misinterpretation of the second amendment to assume that the "right to bear arms" means the right for a private citizen to own any type of weapon -- even those that were developed for military purposes. That logic suggests that private citizens have the right to own other types of military weapons -- many of which we try to limit other countries from possessing. While I support the right of citizens to bear arms, I feel that it is gross negligence of my rights to life, freedom and security to allow assault weapons to be owned by the general public. I greatly oppose the gun activists' selfish, short-sighted and bullying stance that these types of weapons are essential for their safety and sport.

The gun lobby is well financed and organized. However, the majority of us in Fairfield County are tired of the NRA's political power and are ready for our legislators act courageously and morally to make change. I think that you would be surprised at the depth of feeling that the tragedy at Newtown has inspired. Even my most stringently conservative friends have recently pulled their support away from the Republican Party due to its support of gun rights. Recognize that the tide is changing -- even if it is not as vocal nor persistent as the pro-gun lobby. With each tragedy, the anti-gun movement gains more momentum and support. How many more innocent people -- children -- will have to die before you take the initiative to act? Don't let that be your legacy.

Sincerely,

Eileen Thomas
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