

Dear Members of the Gun Violence Working group, thank you for taking the time to read this.

I sit here writing this email at 3:45 am after another night of interrupted sleep, one of many such nights since December 14th, 2012. Like many other people, I've gone from being a person who is wrapped up in her own life to someone compelled to change the status quo. I am a resident of Newtown, a wife and mother of two children. Although I am grateful that you came to Newtown to hear from our citizens, the loss is still too painful to allow me to present verbal testimony before you and so I must content myself with sending emails.

Until recently, I worked at the C.H Booth library in their children's department here in Newtown. I loved that job although the pay was poor. The library job was wonderful because we understood that our community is special - we greeted people as they entered, talked to kids about their interests and listened to them tell us their stories. We had wonderful conversations with parents as we hunted for that perfect book for each child. I knew many of the families who lost a child on the 14th through that job. Catherine Hubbard was an infant when she claimed a special place in my heart. Her older brother Freddie was in my storytime group. I count Jen Hubbard as a friend. Olivia and her mom were also at the library all the time. Ben Wheeler's mom ran wonderful musical programs at the library for children and adults. James Mattioli and several other children and their families were frequently at the library. One of the people who has broken my heart is the father of Jesse Lewis who lost his only child on December 14th. He and his son were regulars at the library and he really was a devoted dad as were these other parents. Think about how close and strong this community is. Think about the pain we are in.

While I do not wish to infringe upon 2nd amendment rights, I have read and re-read this document in order to try to understand its true meaning and the intent of its authors. Certainly, our forefathers could not have foreseen the powerful weapons designed by gun manufacturers for our military. I don't believe that we can justify having these weapons and clips for sale to the general population.

Here are my wishes.

1. Ban assault weapons by getting rid of the two-item loophole for unnamed weapons. Reduce this to one add-on. Destroy or remove those that are already in the state.
2. Ban large clips and destroy or remove existing clips from the state.
3. Do not grandfather in existing assault weapons and large clips.
4. I want all gun sales and registration renewals, even private gun sales to have a background check. I would imagine that the DMV could expand their database to hold his information.

On the same day that you visited Newtown, I saw part of the Senate hearing held in Washington, DC. I heard the gun lobby waltz around direct questions. I understand that they feel sad about the killings in Newtown but that they feel that there are other ways to prevent this from happening again. I disagree. Gun control is but one item contributing to the problem of gun violence, but it is the most immediate. Please view the video of the Senate hearings. I was particularly impressed with the words of the Police Chief of Baltimore who said that background checks work and that we need an assault weapons ban and a ban on large clips. He backed up every statement with facts and statistics, something I saw as particularly lacking from the gun lobby.

I want you to know that gun control is not my only concern. We need to do more to help those with Mental illness. Schools need to be funded to do more to prevent violence. I also believe that there needs to be a safety net for adults with severe mental illness. They and their families don't get the help they need. Yes, we need to do more on this front but I cannot lend proper support to both issues at the same time. You will be hearing from me over the long term.

Like many others, I see this act as so senseless that I must make something good come of it. I have become a kinder person, a more helpful person, and a beginner activist. I realize that the gun lobby is one of the strongest lobbies we have and that CT is a state where gun manufacturers and their employees live and work. I hope that you can see past this lobby and hear the statistics - the larger percentage of people in the country want some legislation for guns and the time is now.

I will be in Hartford, on Valentines day, although I work two part time jobs and will lose pay for the day. I want you to understand how much I care. I want you to understand the magnitude of suffering in my community and most importantly, I want you to do something about it. I want you to do the right thing, the hard thing. Change is hard. But it is crucial that we change now. We cannot allow these losses to continue. You cannot allow these losses to continue. I sat through Columbine, Aurora, Virginia Tech and the others and thought, wow, that is sad. I had no idea what events ike these do to a community. The bravery and fortitude of the families is testament to how much they want change. They have been holding it together for these past 6 weeks for the express purpose of making positive change an outcome of their horror.

Please honor the memory of the 28 who died (and yes, there are 28 victims here), the first responders, many of whom I know as well, who are changed for life, and the people of our community who I assure you are in pain and working hard to make something positive come of this. Please. Now.

Thank you,  
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