

Allow me to preface about myself; I have spent several years in emergency medical services as a primary responder and transporter. I have personally faced violence involving guns as well as mental illness and seen the results first hand. My father spent 29 years in law enforcement, and was passionate about instilling in me his values of public service and doing the right thing even if it was difficult. It is from this background and experience that I learned and form my opinions.

To begin, a rhetorical question: Why are we chastised for being suspicious of an entire religion based on the actions of tens of thousands of violent extremists and hijackers, but expected to stand and cheer when millions of peaceful, law-abiding citizens are being vilified for the actions of a few mentally deficient people? We correctly reminded ourselves then, as we need to do now, that the actions of a few do not accurately reflect the large majority of the population.

Norman Seabrook, of the NY Correctional Officers Union, here speaks in favor of unreasonable restrictions on firearms; "As a law enforcement officer for over 20 years, I understand the importance of instituting a new policy on mandating the limits of bullets that a regular citizen can possess, but as a matter of fact the bad guys are not going to follow this law,".

In the same breath, he asks that a "regular citizen" have a restriction placed upon them that will have NO effect on crime. I ask you, by what stretch of the imagination is this "common sense"?

We need to be seeking effective solutions to the problems before us. We all agree that we as a society should be striving to keep our schools and public places safe from violent behavior. These attacks are not a problem of themselves, but a symptom. If your car does not run right, you would not go to your doctor. He may even be able to recognize the symptoms, but he is not able to fix the problem. He has neither the training to diagnose the problem, nor to fix it. If you are sick, you would not go to your mechanic. He can clearly see you are sick, but would not have the experience to make you well.

The FBI has identified symptoms of the problem. Their UCR data has told us that the symptoms have reduced greatly in the past two decades. They tell us that crimes with guns are down. They tell us that the weapons we are demonizing as "assault weapons" are rarely used in gun crime and are no more or less lethal than any other firearm. They tell us that restricting these guns--the modern day musket, one of the most ubiquitous and widely owned guns in the country—does not have any effect on crime or tragedies such as Sandy Hook. We should be consulting experts in preventing the mentally ill from going untreated. We should be consulting experts in securing buildings from intruders. We had armored doors and an entire nationwide government agency created from scratch within months of the 2001 hijackings. Why would we not devote the same commitment and resources to protecting our schools where our children spend 1/3 of their young lives?? It is criminal that we would place nothing more than a glass door and a few heroic teachers' bare hands between hundreds of children and the evil, deranged men of the world.

A school administrator or a politician are not experts in physical security. No police academy teaches an officer how to prepare a location to repel an assault. We are seeking medication from our mechanic.

These things are difficult to recognize when a madman inflicts horror so close to home, but MUST be considered when legislating how we will live our lives. We must NOT allow ourselves to be distracted from seeking effective solutions to the cause of our problems in the name of putting bandaids on the symptoms.

-Restriction of a gun based on superficial, cosmetic, or ergonomic features is a bandaid. If this restriction were a solution, the number of bolt action hunting rifles and shotguns used to commit murder would not currently dwarf the number of murders with semi-automatic rifles. There is absolutely no legitimate reason Connecticut's failed ban on certain rifles should be expanded, or even allowed to remain in place.

-Restricting the number of bullets a person can fire to protect themselves before reloading is a bandaid. If this were a solution, our police would not require exemptions to such restrictions because the people committing crimes would not outgun them.

-Restricting the ability of the average person to afford ammunition by taxing it into the hands of the wealthy is not only a bandaid measure, but also immoral and elitist.

-The stories of legislators abusing the public trust by pushing laws for emergency certification without both hearings and committee, if true, would constitute unacceptable abuse of authority.

Let us heed Speaker Sharkey's words not as trite hollow rhetoric justifying any action, but as firm guiding principle; "Taking quick action is important, but taking smart action is more important"

I urge these panels to solicit input from experts in the fields of physical security and mental health so you may legislate effective solutions to secure our schools and prevent prohibited persons from accessing dangerous tools of any kind while not placing further restrictions or financial hardship on those who peaceably follow the law.

Thank you for taking the time to listen to my opinions on the matters before us and thank you for your service to the citizens of Connecticut,

Evan Kelly

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