

January 29, 2013

Dear Friends,

I was not able to speak at Monday's hearing in Hartford (1/28/2013), so I am submitting my testimony electronically in strong support of reasonable new restrictions on the rights of gun owners in Connecticut.

I do not object to the right, as memorialized in the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution, of law-abiding Americans to own a gun for lawful purposes, like hunting or self-defense. But nor do I object to reasonable limits on that right in the name of public safety. I feel strongly that a comprehensive approach to gun control must address the following things:

- stronger enforcement of existing gun laws
- safe storage of weapons
- 100% background checks, no exceptions and no loopholes
- elimination of high capacity ammunition clips
- ban on military-style assault weapons
- reasonable limits on the number of weapons a person can purchase in a short period of time
- reasonable limits on the amount of ammunition a person can purchase in a short period of time
- better coordination with mental health professionals so that guns do not fall into the hands of the seriously mentally ill

I reject the notion that new restrictions will be ineffective in stopping illegal gun crime. Not only will they serve as a deterrent, but tougher restrictions will have an immediate impact on the kind of guns and ammunition available for purchase, the ease with which they are purchased, and the extent of the harm that any one gun can cause. I have to believe that we will all be safer as a result. But perhaps more importantly, this is an urgent moral issue in our community. As moral people, we have an obligation to object to the current, unthinkable scope of gun violence in Connecticut and the United States.

Along with our neighbors in New York, Connecticut has emerged as a national leader on this issue. On the federal level, I am proud of the leadership shown by Senator Blumenthal and Senator Murphy in the wake of the Sandy Hook massacre. On the state level, this task force, together with Governor Malloy, is doing a commendable job of leading Connecticut through a thorough examination of our options.

Public opinion is overwhelmingly on the side of tougher restrictions. We must not lose our resolve to bring positive change from the tragedy in Newtown. The nation is looking to Connecticut to lead on this issue. Pass reasonable, comprehensive gun control legislation now.

Very truly yours,

Eryn Ament Bingle
Riverside, CT