

After the unspeakable events that transpired in Newtown last month resulting in 26 senseless deaths, we are all searching for solutions that will limit gun violence in our country. One of my biggest concerns is that our Connecticut Legislature and our US Congress will act on emotion and yield to the pressure to pass "*something*," and the result will be legislation that is ineffective in preventing gun violence but at the same time strips second amendment rights from law abiding citizens.

My background is unique in that I am a veteran of the US Navy having been honorably discharged as a Lieutenant. I am currently a practicing surgeon with offices in Milford and Derby, and living in Orange. I have been involved coaching youth sports working with children from ages 3-18 for 18 years and received a public service award for my service in 2005 from Susan Bysiewicz, the Connecticut Secretary of State at the time. In addition, I have been a member of the medical staff of Yale New Haven Hospital, Hospital of St Raphael, Milford Hospital and served as the Chief of Dentistry and Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at Griffin Hospital for 16 years. I have also had a faculty at The Yale School of Medicine - Assistant Clinical Professor of Surgery and have taught surgery residents at these institutions for over 28 years. I am also the father of two children, now young adults.

In other words, I have experience working with small children, adolescents, young adults, and young doctors. I have also treated patients of all ages that have suffered gunshot wounds to the head and neck area since the early 1980's. In the 1980's I wrote paper on the characteristics of wounds caused by various firearms. No one has a better first hand knowledge and appreciation for the effects of gun violence.

I am also a gun owner. I acquired my first firearm at age 21, and own firearms to this day. That is a period of 39 years where none of my firearms have been used to shoot someone, intimidate someone, or been used in the commission of a crime. There is nothing unique about the firearms I own, in fact some of them accept high capacity magazines. I know many other Connecticut law abiding, responsible gun owners. We are not the problem. The solution to decreasing gun violence is not limiting the capacity of magazines. Banning certain types of firearms isn't a solution either. The outward appearance of a firearm does not make it any more or less lethal. It is my belief that efforts should be directed toward keeping firearms out of the hands of criminals, the mentally unstable, and preventing illegal gun trafficking. I am all for background checks, and holding gun owners responsible for securing their firearms and making reasonable efforts to prevent their firearms from falling into the wrong hands.

The problem is not legal gun owners. The problems occur when firearms are obtained by those with criminal intent, and when firearms fall into the hands of a certain small subset of the mentally ill. Legislation that bans an inanimate object such as a firearm will not change human behavior. This a problem of human behavior, yet there are those that seek to deny constitutional rights to law abiding citizens with irrational gun bans, and magazine and ammunition restrictions. None of those measures are known to be effective.

I trust that you will take a step back and evaluate the facts objectively before making a final decision with regards to this matter. I believe the second amendment grants law abiding citizens the right to gun ownership without interference from the government.

Sincerely,
Dr. Fedele N. Volpe