

My name is Francine Larson. I live in Madison, CT. Thank you for the opportunity to speak.

I have four points to present:

First, I support all of the proposed legislation put forth by Connecticut Against Gun Violence. I especially support the limitation of high capacity magazines to 7 bullets; a complete ban on assault weapons and ammunitions with no grandfathering; and background checks and gun registrations for each and every sale and transfer of any type of firearm. I have come to understand that what defines an “assault weapon” is a term of art. Semantics aside, for me, an assault weapon is any type of firearm that functions like those used by the military with the capacity to fire as many rounds as possible in the shortest amount of time as possible to kill as many people as possible. They are a cancer on a civilized society and should be eliminated.

Second, while I will leave the Constitutional instruction to those more learned than I, to those who hold the Second Amendment as sacrosanct, I point you to Justice Scalia in Heller, which held that, “like most rights, the right secured by the Second Amendment is not unlimited; it is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner and for whatever purpose; that nothing should be taken to cast doubt on laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms; and that the prohibition of dangerous and unusual weapons is supported”.

As to the Second Amendment right to protect oneself from a tyrannical government, I ask what century are we living in? That belief is nothing more than magical thinking. Unless citizens are allowed to own a garage full of tanks and a hanger full of F-16s, even a whole town armed with AR-15s is no match for today’s US military. The idea that unregulated gun ownership and trade protects us against tyranny is baseless. Democracies around the world regulate guns, preserve their freedoms and achieve firearm murder rates that are a tiny fraction of those in America. Check with the citizens of the UK, Australia and Japan; ask them if they feel oppressed as a result of strict gun regulation or just a little safer from mass shootings in their schools, malls, movie theatres, churches and temples.

Third, I hear pundits talk about “political courage” when discussing whether legislators will vote one way or another on an issue, especially on an issue as contentious as gun control. But, apportioning courage as a requisite for a politician to do his or her job is a gross misuse of the word.

COURAGE, I humbly point out, is what was displayed by six women at Sandy Hook School on Dec 14th as they, without a moment's hesitation, laid down their lives in an attempt to save the children in their charge. I ask you as legislators....What will you do in response to their courage? Will you need "political courage" just to carry out the responsibilities of your job?

Lastly, on a more personal note.....This is a picture of the first grader in my family. His name is Xander. One of my three grandsons, he is 7 years old and in the first grade at Miller-Driscoll School in Wilton, CT. For those of you who are not lucky enough to have a first grader in your family, this is what those classrooms in Sandy Hook were filled with on December 14th. Xander, aware of the events at Sandy Hook and the ensuing debate over gun control, recently asked.....Mommy....Is it just the dumb people who don't want gun control?

In our family, the answer to that question is, yes.....it is only the dumb people who don't want gun control.

As you think about what your answer is for Xander, I will leave you with a question of my own:

Collectively, as we try to solve this problem.....are the adults in the room at least as smart as a first grader?

Thank you.....

