

Honorable Members of the Connecticut Senate and House of Representatives:

I am currently Chair of the Senior Section of the Connecticut Chapter of the American College of Surgeons, but I must note that I speak as an individual. However, the national organization of the American College of Surgeons has made a recent statement supporting President Obama's initiatives on firearm safety.

I am writing in support of the proposals of the Connecticut Coalition Against Gun Violence. As a surgeon who served in that capacity in Vietnam, I have had extensive experience treating gunshot wounds --both during my training in inner city Baltimore and in Nashville, Tennessee as well as in my 29 years of practice in Connecticut. The high velocity weapons, like the one used in Newtown, are designed to effect maximal tissue damage and are truly weapons of war. (What damage needs to be inflicted in target shooting? And it is specious to claim that these are weapons needed for hunting.)

I am truly saddened by the many conversations I have on the topic of reducing firearm deaths by legislation, where an otherwise reasonable person will shrug his shoulders and say "But it won't make any difference." This defeatist attitude has no grounds in data, since the CDC and NIH have been forbidden by NRA backed legislation from doing research and acquiring information.

Connecticut should be an exemplar in passing sensible and broad reaching legislation affecting firearm availability, strict enforcement of gun law violations, attending to our mental health needs and promulgating concern about exposing children and adolescents to desensitizing violent media.

I am out of the State at present; but when I introduce myself as being "from Connecticut", I have often noted a deep intake of breath ever since the Newtown horror.

Please allow me to add, "from Connecticut, with pride" by forcefully tackling this bedeviling public health problem.

Respectfully,

Frank J. Scarpa, M.D., F.A.C.S.

Greenwich, Connecticut