

Dear Working Group Members,

As tragic as Newtown was, the daily toll in our cities is even more appalling. For 25 years I worked in juvenile court in Bridgeport where death and disability from gunfire of children and adults was chronic. During one period of drug gang related gunfire, mothers told me of putting their youngest children to bed in their bathtubs to avoid random gunshots entering their apartments from outside. Yet we have become so numb to this epidemic it barely makes the back pages in city news.

The only adequate memorial to Newtown's children and teachers and the daily carnage on our urban streets is an effective regulatory remedy: a total prohibition on possession of semi-automatic weapons (or at least assault like semis), significant limitation on magazine size, and effective registration of all guns from all sources. We are the only country that allows these killing machines on our streets. After similar tragedies in Australia and the United Kingdom, they enacted such bans and have seen both their gun death rates plummet and mass shootings end.

As with cars, why are gun owners not mandated to carry liability insurance? Why is proof of gun registration not necessary to purchase ammunition? I have to produce and sign for minor medication that won't kill or injure others. And certainly enhanced civil and criminal penalties for noncompliance will be necessary to afford any real measure of compliance.

This is clearly a crisis in public safety and public health. We regulate cars and toys but not guns? There are limitations on all constitutional guarantees (speech can't be libelous or endanger others, or incite to riot) but gun carnage on our streets and now in our first grade classrooms is permissible?

Of course mental health and violent culture may factor into some of these events but the *remedy* is by weapons regulation: it is fantasy to think somehow increased mental health services (much as I support them) are going to end this nightmare. *Please* don't let this dialogue again degenerate into demonizing the mentally ill or video games. It is *availability* and *momentary impulse* that generates most victims. Keep the focus on effective remedy, regulation, and not collateral issues. And gun violence prevention should certainly be a regular program area for relevant state agencies e.g. OPM, Child Advocate, Department of Health etc *with annual reporting*.

Over 90,000 Americans were shot last year: 31,000 deaths, over 3,000 children buried. Nearly 300 will be shot today. More tears than in our oceans. The time

for outrage and legislative action is now. Your comprehensive regulation of guns, ammunition, registration and background checks, and liability insurance for gun owners would be greeted with great relief in this long standing epidemic of fear and violence that has plagued our state.

Respectfully,

George Oleyer
467 Quaker Farms Road
Oxford CT 06478