

Dear Task Force Members,  
2013

January 29,

We weep with our neighbors in Newtown. This is indeed enough! The only adequate memorial to these children and teachers is an effective remedy: a total prohibition on possession of semi-automatic weapons and large magazines 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.

Newtown is of course not the only killing field in Connecticut. For 25 years I worked in Bridgeport juvenile court where death and disability of children and adults by gunfire was a daily threat. At one point of drug related gunfire in several neighborhoods, mothers told me of putting their small children to sleep in their bathtubs to avoid random gunfire entering their apartments from outside. Yet we have become so dulled to the ongoing tragedy in our cities that it barely makes the back pages of the news.

Let's not be delayed and lulled to inaction yet again. What of public safety? What of 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? Your serious consideration of criminal and civil penalties for violation of new restrictions is most urgently requested as perhaps the only way to accomplish real compliance. As for cars, mandatory liability insurance should be required of every gun owner.

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 generate most of the victims. Keep the focus on effective remedy, regulation, and not collateral issues. This subject should also be a target focus of relevant state agencies e.g. OPM's Juvenile Justice Advisory Committee, Child Advocate, Department of Health etc.

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, magazines, ammunition, enhanced penalties for non-compliance, and mandatory liability insurance for gunowners would be greeted with great relief in this long standing backdrop of fear and death which has plagued our state.

Respectfully,  
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