

Special Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence and Children 's Safety

Public Safety Hearing Monday, January 28, 2013

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I am a gun owner and sportsman, but also a Grandfather of young children. I believe some things must be done to help prevent another Sandy Hook tragedy, but others provide a false sense of security and will only hurt legitimate gun owners.

Believing that a ban on so-called "assault" weapons and magazines over ten rounds will prevent a tragedy is just plain wrong as long as the second amendment exists.

Military assault rifles are machine guns severely restricted by law and unavailable to ordinary citizens. The majority of rifles and pistols in circulation, including those that are banned, are semi-automatic (one shot at a time).

Expanding the Connecticut ban to include even more rifles because of their appearance won't stop perpetrators from using other semi automatic weapons in their place. The current ban has had little or no effect on gun violence, which has actually gone down in recent years.

My opinion is that a ban on high capacity magazines is also flawed. A magazine is a small box with a spring that stores cartridges and attaches to the gun. There are millions in circulation, and they are easy to make and change. Only honest citizens will comply with such a ban.

The focus must be on what will work, not just emotion. I believe the following public safety changes can help prevent another tragedy and deserve immediate attention:

Strengthen background checks on gun buyers and require checks on all gun sales. Mental health, disciplinary, and criminal data is often not available because of restrictive privacy laws or lack of coordination between agencies. Without this data available, checks are of little value.

Increase public awareness of early warning signs, how to report them and what will be done to follow up.

Study the effect of violent movies, the Internet, and violent games on young people. Games that enable the player to practice shooting people should be restricted.

Each school district should have the option to address safety as they see fit, including the use of armed resource officers. Perpetrators should not be confident that they are safe to do their evil in a gun free zone.

Enforce existing Connecticut gun laws and improve record keeping. Although we have some of the most restrictive laws in the nation, often they are not enforced.

Review public safety aspects of mental health. Getting troubled people out of the general population and into proper facilities is a Public Safety issue. It follows that technology to alert authorities when those with mental issues living among us stop taking prescribed medication need to be pursued.

Sincerely,

James P Memery