

Honored Working Group Members

I am writing you today both as a human being who cannot fathom the horror that took place at Sandy Hook, and as law abiding citizen who just happens to be a gun owner.

Whatever steps that are taken in the wake of this tragedy, I would hope that they would be an honest attempt to make the situation better, and not just to be punitive towards gun owners.

To that end, I would like to voice my **OPPOSITION** to the following bills:

HB-5112 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DISCLOSURE OF THE NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF PERSONS HOLDING HANDGUN PERMITS.

This is solely designed to embarrass and harass permit holders. It will accomplish nothing to prevent any crime, and will provide criminals with shopping lists of which homes to rob.

HB-2068 AN ACT REQUIRING THE MAINTENANCE OF LIABILITY INSURANCE BY FIREARM OWNERS AND ESTABLISHING A SALES TAX ON AMMUNITION.

Firearms owners are already criminally and civilly responsible for their actions. This is again intended to punish/financially dissuade individuals from possessing firearms. Additionally, requiring liability insurance on a federal and state individually guaranteed right, would on it's face appear to be unconstitutional. Levying a prohibitive sales tax on ammunition is again designed to be punitive. It also would make it financially difficult for individuals to afford practicing with their arms, negatively affecting their ability to defend themselves.

HB-5452 AN ACT REQUIRING GUN OWNERS TO CARRY LIABILITY INSURANCE

I oppose it for the reasons listed above.

HB-5647 AN ACT CONCERNING HIGH CAPACITY FIREARMS.

I have owned firearms and magazines addressed by this bill since the 1980's. I have a spotless legal/mental health record, and will fight in the courts any law that would forcibly seize my property. And, who would determine what was fair compensation? This law would involve firearms that are worth tens-of-thousands of dollars. Will the state fund that kind of compensation?

SB-122 AN ACT CONCERNING RESTRICTIONS ON GUN USE.

This proposed legislation is just not useful to discuss. There is very little support for returning to the firearms technology of the 18th century.

SB-124 AN ACT BANNING LARGE CAPACITY AMMUNITION MAGAZINES.

Almost all semi automatic rifles and pistols are sold with magazines exceeding 10 rounds as standard from the factory. This legislation would involve a huge number of individuals, unfairly exposing them to a possible felony conviction, and will be impossible to enforce.

SB-140 AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR FIREARM OWNERS AND SALES TAX ON AMMUNITION.

I oppose it for the same reasons as HR-2068

SB-161 AN ACT CONCERNING THE REDUCTION OF GUN VIOLENCE.

While several of the proposals of this act make sense, it is too far reaching, and I cannot support it. I am especially opposed to the provision that requires the biannual registration of all firearms. This will do nothing to prevent crime, and only serve to harass gun owners.

SB-501 and 504 ACTS CONCERNING THE BANNING OF ASSAULT WEAPONS AND HIGH CAPACITY MAGAZINES.

Both pieces of legislation are too vague to support.

It would be less than realistic to expect no changes to the CT gun laws after what has occurred in Newtown. The proposed legislation that increases penalties for criminal activities with firearms, and tighten access to firearms to prohibited persons make total sense, and have my support. However, legislation that only serves to punish gun owners, and take away their property, will do nothing to make us safer.

My 35 years of military service, and substantial experience in the civilian firearms business, have given me a great deal of experience with the firearms that are currently under debate. These firearms do not shoot "high powered" ammunition. Most hunting rifles shoot far more powerful cartridges. Armies of the world learned some sixty years ago that hunting rifle power was un-needed for most military missions. Also, military style full metal jacket ammunition is actually require by the international rules of war for all militaries, because it causes LESS severe wounds than hunting soft point or hollow point bullets. And, for all their much maligned and banned "black rifle" features like flash hidens, NONE of these add to the lethality of the rifles. Yes, they are designed to kill, but so are almost all firearms. A deer rifle or shotgun will do harm a human just as easily as deer.

After the horror of the 9/11 attacks, there were calls throughout the nation for understanding for the Muslim community. It was correctly pointed out, that those 19 individuals did not represent the one billion Muslims in the world. And, punitive laws, although meant to protect us, would not be fair or right to push through at their expense. Please understand that gun owners are not that deranged individual that committed this attack. They are your friends, neighbors, and co-workers, and should not be subjected to draconian laws, pushed through in a forced sense of urgency, with the intention of punishing them for owning firearms.

Whatever actions your committee recommends, I would respectfully request that it would allow law-abiding citizens like myself to retain our legally acquired, legally held, legally used property.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

James Whipple
Shelton, CT