

Gun Violence Task Force Members,

Thank you for taking the time to address the recent tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary and meeting with your constituents to consider our opinions as you move forward with legislative action. I would like to take a few moments to express my thoughts on the matter, particularly regarding the current legislation being considered.

First, I would like to point out that I am not a lawyer, and therefore will abstain from making any arguments regarding the Second Amendment to the US Constitution and Article First, Section 15 of the Connecticut Constitution, other than to point out that both of these protect the right of the citizens of Connecticut to keep and bear arms. While the courts have ruled that these rights are not unlimited, I believe much of the proposed legislation is clearly beyond reasonable restrictions.

Second, I believe that most of the proposed legislation attempts to place restrictions on the law abiding, and would have little effect on those that wish to cause harm. For example, heavily taxing ammunition, or requiring liability insurance would have no effect on someone who wants to harm people, as insurance typically does not cover criminal actions, and small quantities of ammunition is not particularly expensive. Heavily Taxing ammunition actually makes the citizens of Connecticut less safe, as it would deter lawful firearm owners from pursuing proper training.

Putting restrictions on magazine capacity or limiting online sales of ammunition is not the correct approach to limit gun violence. Neither is banning semi-automatic firearms, which make up the majority of firearms used for personal defense. Violence has occurred since the dawn of time. Limiting the tools that citizens use to defend themselves is not the answer.

While I have many arguments why almost all of the proposed legislation will not deter crime and how some are impossible to effectively enforce, and in several cases actually put the citizens of Connecticut in more danger, I would also like to suggest a few ideas to prevent gun violence.

First, I would strongly suggest forming a task force, or funding an unbiased study to research the effects of gun free zones on deterring crime. From my perspective, it appears that most of the more recent newsworthy shootings have occurred where firearms are not permitted. Typically these shootings met little resistance, and where only stopped once police arrived.

Second, I would suggest allocating more resources to enforce and prosecute current gun laws. It is my understanding that there are over 70,000 failed background checks that occur every year in the United States, and of these denials, typically less than 200 are prosecuted. Perhaps gun violence could be reduced by simply enforcing the current laws, rather than making new laws.

Thank you again for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Jason Gawencki
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