

January 26th, 2013

To the Committee:

I am the holder of a valid Connecticut Pistol Permit, a hunter, target shooter, and a father who is ready to defend his home and family against intruders. I am also a full-time, tenured college professor; I earned my Ph.D. at the University of Connecticut and am currently serving as a Department Chair at a mid-sized Connecticut university. Thus I regard myself as a responsible and productive citizen of this state, entitled to have my statement considered by the Committee on Gun Violence.

I write to urge you not to promulgate any further restrictions on the basic civil rights guaranteed by the Second Amendment to Constitution of the United States. While everyone with a human heart is dismayed and horrified by the recent shootings in Newton, denying law-abiding and peace-loving gun owners their rights is not the answer to school security, neither will it help in terms of stopping other violence. Many arguments and considerations might be adduced to bolster this statement, but I will confine myself to a three major points:

- 1) We are often told that guns have caused X number of deaths in a given amount of time. What most politicians and the media never mention is how many crimes and deaths are *prevented* by legal gun owners. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 550 rapes, 1100 murders, and 5200 other crimes are prevented by simply showing a gun *every day* (2000 BJS *Crime Victimization Survey*).
- 2) We are told that the general public does not “need” high capacity magazines or semiautomatic weapons and that banning them will not impose on gun rights. On the contrary, inasmuch as criminals will have them, possession of efficient modern firearms is necessary for effective self-defense, which is at the heart of the Second Amendment.
- 3) We are led to believe that only a few rural extremists, the NRA, and gun manufacturers uphold gun rights. In fact there are more than 100 million legal gun owners in the United States, and a majority of the country rejects the need for more laws. Aside from statistics, I would direct your attention to the massive influx of letters, calls, and emails opposing more gun control to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives in recent days. On the federal level, there is apparently a dawning realization that gun rights supporters are well-organized and that they *will vote*. Law-abiding gun owners simply will not stand for being scapegoated for the actions of a madman.

I ask you to think carefully before you make laws similar to the deeply flawed, ill-considered, and unconstitutional ones recently passed in New York State. Extended and expensive legal challenges will most definitely follow. Instead, we should concentrate on hardening the target at schools and on upgrading Connecticut’s input to the NICS system, which may actually stop some mentally ill person from obtaining a firearm. As the loving father of a two-year old and an eight-year old, I can assure you: if I thought that new and draconian gun laws like those being considered now would save any lives whatsoever, I would support them fully. But they won’t. They will distract us from pursuing real solutions.

