

Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Jennifer Allen. I live in West Hartford, am a mother of 2, a wife and work as a musician. I am testifying to the need to seriously consider taking stronger gun control measures in Connecticut.

My life was pretty much a normal American life before December 14th. On that day my god-daughter, Ana Marquez-Greene, was gruesomely shot to death along with her classmates in Newtown, CT. Since that day my life has changed and I can no longer be silent. I will stand up against gun violence and for the VALUE of ALL humans.

A little background- I saw Ana right after she came into this world in the hospital. She was beautiful even on that first day! She grew up with my two children and became one of my children's best friends (her brother is their other best friend!). We spent MANY days and nights together doing things that kids do- playing, dancing, bowling, eating ice cream, going to see outdoor concerts, having sleepovers, telling bed time stories, playing slip and slide, going to Chuck E Cheese, and giving "group hugs". These were just some of the many times we spent together. My husband Kris and I were charged with being her god-parents and we were honored and grateful for that privilege.

Before December 14th, 2012, I had only thought about guns when I would do prayer walks in Hartford to pray against the street violence which flourishes there even to this day. I felt like a small voice in a world that didn't care if guns were available or not. I guess I started to feel like it didn't matter - I started to think maybe guns are "just part of life". But on December 14, 2012 all things changed. I won't accept that it is "just part of life". Guns are part of the problem - not the whole problem but a large part. Less guns will equal less gun related death. IT is stupid to believe otherwise. Our environment is what molds our thinking. Will we continue to have a society that thinks guns are part of daily life or will we take a stand and create a more peaceful community where we can trust and count on one another.

I am not naive- I know that Utopia doesn't exist and bad things will still happen- but NOW is the time. We have the chance NOW to make a change in real things that matter. As Dr. Martin Luther King Jr said " Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

Please don't be silenced by big money gun companies and the NRA. We as human beings need to stop being bullied by big money and companies that try to tell us we "NEED" guns and that it's our God given right to have them. "God-given rights" are the values you come out of the womb having and deserving. I DO NOT believe that guns are something we need. It would be silly to think that babies need a gun but that is exactly what gun companies want people to think. Something important to keep an eye on is that the NRA and gun companies are targeting youth. Raising them up to think they "need" guns. These are tactics of manipulation for money and power. This sickens me. We need to open our eyes just like we did with cigarettes and McDonalds and many even worse evils of this world.

In reality I know guns are not going anywhere soon but I do believe that we need to have stricter laws around them. I was appalled to hear people testifying on Monday that their shooting holidays would be too expensive if we taxed ammunition or that it would take too long to load a gun if we capped the maximum amount that a magazine can shoot or having too strict laws would hurt companies profits. We need to think of people's rights to LIVE not the convenience of someone who shoots as a hobby or uses a gun to protect their home or gun companies losing profits.

PLEASE we need common sense - to uphold the idea that a PERSON is WORTH MORE THAN A GUN!

I pray that you as a committee will be able to stand up and do exactly that. DO NOT cave to big money and do not worry about your job. I believe that our God above is a much higher authority that you and I will both have to answer to. I pray that our actions will reflect those of Jesus- ones that cared for others and did not hurt others. Jesus cared for others more than his own "rights" and may we try to live that way too.

Thank you,
Jen Allen

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Jen Allen

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