

Dear Members of the Newtown Task Force,

I am a resident of Newtown. I have lived here for 19 years. We moved here because it was and is a family friendly town. The events of December 14th have reshaped our lives forever. Our society is broken and we have been given the opportunity to repair the flaws to create a stronger Newtown, a stronger country. It is time for us to revisit gun laws how they are being managed today.

Prior to having children and becoming a stay at home mom, I was a trauma nurse in the neurosurgical intensive care unit at Yale-New Haven Hospital. Unfortunately, I frequently saw the damage that guns can do to the human body while working. The bodies are torn, shredded and many times have wounds beyond medical help. Families in turn are torn, shredded and have wounds beyond any consolation. I am disgusted by all the young lives that have been lost to the senseless violence we in this country and we have turned blind eye to it. Did we really have to lose 20 young children and eight adults to finally discuss gun regulations? How many more will we lose while we discuss the pros and cons of current addressing gun laws? Let's use common sense to change our world now.

We allow the few to dictate to the many whose rights are more inalienable. We as law abiding citizens have a right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". I don't believe that someone has the right to purchase a military style weapon over that right. We need to ban all weapons of military design from being purchased in this country. We need a federal weapons registry. We regulate the ownership and training of individuals who want to drive a motor vehicle. Same should be required for all gun ownership with all weapons registered and renewed on a yearly basis. Mandatory training and licensing of all gun owners with regulation for the handling and storing of weapons should be created. Create harsh penalties for those who do not secure their weapons that get into the hands of those who do great harm. Restrict and monitor the sale of ammunition and/or the components required to reload one's own ammunition. If I have to swipe my driver license to purchase Sudafed then we should do the same for ammunition.

As a health care professional, I am distraught at the treatment or non treatment of those who need mental health care. Parents have to fight administration to provide what their children need in schools. This is unacceptable! These measures should be in place and offered to help families and children while in school. We do not have a reset button. Early intervention is the key. Please revisit the current laws and guidelines to allow families to properly manage and care for their family members, not only while they are students in the school system but throughout their lives. Our attitudes towards education and mental healthcare issues need to be addressed for any real change to our society.

I know this is a difficult, multidimensional problem. I appreciate your dedication to these issues.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Peterson
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