

Please consider this testimony for the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group. Unfortunately I will not be there live.

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Although I am sure much of the testimony will be focused today on the personal aspect of gun violence and its impact on real people, with respectfully not intending to diminish that perspective in any way, I'd like to discuss a different facet of this issue to ensure it weighs into the decisions you are about to undertake.

It is without a doubt, that money and power is inextricably linked to this issue, and played a central role in getting us to the current state of crisis –one where armed police now guard the sanctuary of the classroom at the K through 12 schools in my town. This is the result, solely from a state of gun proliferation where access to weapons of immense killing capability are trivial to acquire. Consequently, the protections necessary to protect public places and sanctuaries of the peaceful innocent must logically escalate. Who does this escalation benefit? Clearly, with each improvement in a firearm sold to anyone willing to buy, more sales ensue to protect against them...be it body armor, more guns, more security, or even the new Kevlar lined book bag backpack. It is a self-serving cycle benefiting specific industries that is being largely funded by you and I.

Why should those who choose to live non-violent lives have to subsidize those who do not?

When our states and municipalities already need to make trade-offs between school supplies and sports programs, why should they be cut while adding expensive security? Why should the companies and associations that foment fear and paranoia, profit from it?

There are a hundred other why's, Why's that I cannot explain to my children or any person that fundamentally believes our society is a good one.

I therefore respectfully request that you consider using all economic and financial means to place the burden of the total cost of ownership and responsibility directly on those who profit from it. Considerations should include, but not be limited to:

- The firearm industry paying for all additional security added to all CT schools and institutions
- The firearm industry paying for each firearm and incremental protection gear required by police because of the incrementally increasing lethality of their product
- The firearm industry paying for all medical costs associated with all firearm accidents and restitution for inadvertent deaths
- The firearm industry paying for retroactive safety and controls that disable firearm that are not being fired by their intended owner
- The firearm industry funding the ongoing research needed, the research the CDC was denied by NRA lobbying, to bring transparency and a data driven discussion to the public
- Accountability for industry executives for every injury or death that occurs from a firearm that was not used in defense. Each executive and board member should have to read the death report, view the pictures of the unintended carnage caused by their products, and personally sign a letter of acknowledgement to the next of kin.

None of these suggestions impede in any way on the constitutional right to bear arms. It simply provides just and proper economic balance to the costs they deliberately and insidiously imposed on me and my community. Although some of these suggestions may sound extreme or overreaching, it is simply because the industry and lobby has so skewed the discussion from rational responsibility and accountability, to fear, terror and a distorted interpretation of the constitution. We require responsibility from every other industry that sells a consumer product and we should settle for nothing less now. Money is a language that resonates with the unaccountable, and it is clearly within the power of the Government of the State of CT to use this economic tool to bring accountability to those predominately responsible arming the irresponsible.

Respectfully,  
Jim Hodson  
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