My name is John Chunis. I live in Rocky Hill, CT.   I am the father of three grown children, and an expecting grandparent.

I am a Professional Engineer, Licensed in the State of Connecticut. Having worked a good portion of my career in root cause analysis and the development of corrective actions at the Millstone Nuclear Station, I have a strong appreciation for data when making conclusions, some of which I would like to share with you.

When looking at our neighboring states in the Northeast, data from the FBI (Table 1) shows that Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine and Rhode Island have lower per capita murder rates, yet they have the least restrictive gun control laws. One must ask why?   Are they more civilized than us? Or is it that criminals tend to congregate in areas where they know their prey are more likely to be undefended, that is, where gun control laws restrict law abiding citizens.

It has been asked, why does anyone need a military style looking gun or a 30 round magazine for defense. Ask the Korean property owners who lived through the LA riots of 1992. Or perhaps, ask Dr. Petit or anyone else who survived a home invasion. Also, just the sight of an AR-15 in the hands of a homeowner, would likely scare away the intruders without a shot being fired. That is the best form of self-defense.

When looking at the murder rates by weapon (Table 2), data from the FBI shows that murder by rifles (which is the category of one of the weapon used in the Sandy Hook tragedy), is the lowest contributor (2.6%) of all the categories examined, below; shotguns (2.8%), hands and fists (5.7%), other non-firearm weapons (13.1%) and, knives and cutting weapons (13.4%).   Further controls now, on the lowest contributor to the overall murder rate, does not make sense, and will have a negligible impact on reducing gun violence.

When it comes down to it, we kill more people due to distracted drivers on our highways than we do by assault weapons. Latest NHTSA data (reference 1) shows that 3,092 people were killed in 2010 due to distracted drivers, almost 10 times the number killed by rifles. When I heard US Senator Feinstein emotionally proclaim last week that "we must stop the killing, killing and killing, and now is our chance", I thought she was referring to cellphones, but I was wrong.

Finally, when looking at historical trends (Table 3), murder rates did initially decrease in the mid 90's when the federal assault weapon ban was introduced. However, this was mainly due to reduced murders by handguns, which is the major contributor to the overall murder rate, and not assault weapons. A slight increase occurred in the years just before expiration in 2004 and peaked in 2006. What is interesting is that the trend after that declined even further and continues to decline even without the ban. It is also interesting to note, that the murder rate due to rifles (including assault weapons) in 2011 was lower than any year that the federal ban was in effect, and it continues to decrease.   This is opposite of what one would expect if there was a true relationship between the assault weapon ban and gun violence.

So then, how is the decline in murder rate in the mid 90's explained? Steven Levitt, Professor of Economics, University of Chicago performed a detailed analysis of crime rates in the 1990s (reference 2) and concludes that the decline was not due to gun control measures but due to:

1. increases in the number of police,
2. increased incarceration and longer sentences,
3. receding crack cocaine epidemic, and

4. legalization of abortion in 1973, resulting in significantly fewer unwanted children 20 years later, who would have a greater propensity for crime.

This does appear astounding, but it makes sense and provides a consistent explanation to the entire trend. Based on this, one would conclude that the federal assault weapon ban of 1994 did little to reduce overall murder rates.

In conclusion, imposing further irrational gun control measures, based on an emotional hysteria over a low probability horrific event, instead of a detailed examination of the data, will only be a step in the wrong direction, and may potentially have more adverse consequences.

I appreciate your time and allowing me to present my views. Thank you.

References:
(1) http://www.distraction.gov/content/get-the-facts/facts-and-statistics.html.
(2) Steven D. Levitt, Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s: Four Factors that Explain the Decline and Six that Do Not, *Journal of Economic Perspectives—Volume 18, Number 1—Winter 2004.*

Table 1 - Per Capita Murder Rates by all Firearms

State	Level of Restrictions (1)(2)	Existing Assault Weapon Ban (3)	2011 Firearm murders (4)	2011 Population (5)	per 100K capita firearm murder rate
Connecticut	74	Yes	94	3,580,709	2.63
New York	65	Yes	445	19,465,197	2.29
Massachusetts	85	Yes	122	6,587,536	1.85
Maine	23	No	12	1,328,188	0.9
Vermont	4	No	4	626,431	0.64
Rhode Island	56	No	5	1,051,302	0.48
New Hampshire	17	No	6	1,318,194	0.46

(1) 0 least restrictive, 100 most restrictive.
(2) J.S. Kappas Esq., "2012 Traveler's Guide to the Firearm Laws of the Fifty Sates,17th edition. Jan 2012.
(3) http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_laws_in_the_United_States_by_state
(4) http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-20
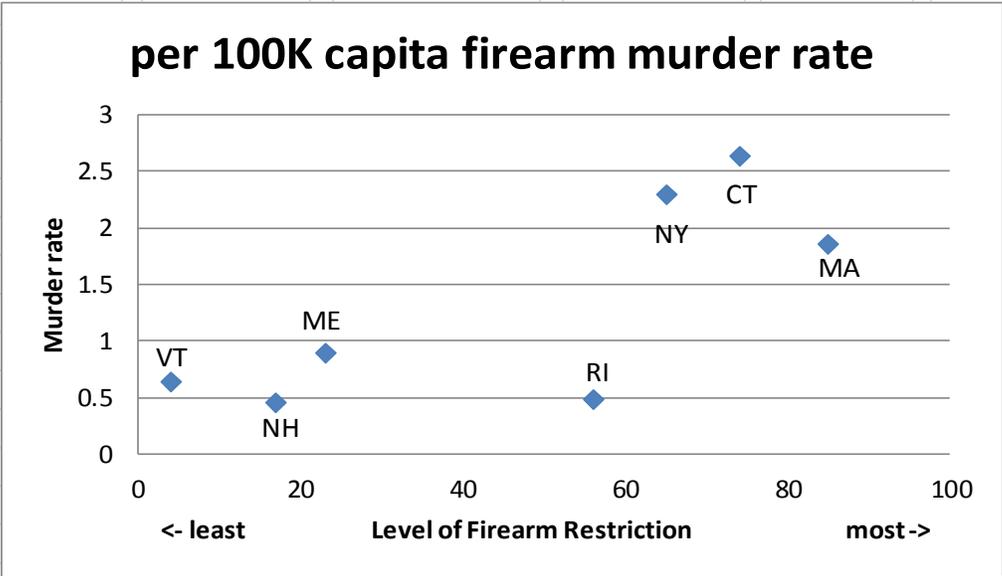(5)http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-5

Table 2 - 2011 USA Crime Data

Crime	Number of murders	% of Total
Total 2011 murders	12,664	100.0
by handguns	6,220	49.1
by knives or cutting instruments	1,694	13.4
by firearms type unknow	1,684	13.3
by other non firearm weapons	1,659	13.1
by hands, fists, etc.	728	5.7
by shot guns	356	2.8
by rifles	323	2.6

Data from FBI web page:
http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-20

Table 3 - US Murder Trend (1)

Year	Firearm Murders	Murders by Rifles	Murders by Handguns
1995	13,676	637	11198
1996	10,744	546	8594
1997	10,369	624	8104
1998	9,143	538	7361
1999	8,259	387	6498
2000	8,493	396	6686
2001	8,719	389	6790
2002	9,369	480	7176
2003	9,638	390	7701
2004	9,326	393	7265
2005	10,100	442	7543
2006	10,177	436	7795
2007	10,086	450	7361
2008	9,484	375	6755
2009	9,146	348	6452
2010	8,775	358	6009
2011	8,583	323	6220

(1) http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/ucr#ucr_cius

Yearly Trend