

Testimony to the public hearing

To the members of the Task Force On Gun Violence Prevention And Children's Safety

From: John Felciano, 39 Banner Rd. Moodus, CT 06469

IE: SB-122, 161, 140, 124, HB 5452, 5268

Task Force members,

I've been a gun owner all my life and have participated in all forms of shooting activities from casual range shooting to organized competitive matches as well as hunting. I'm a state certified CEFS (conservation, education, firearms safety) instructor for the state of Connecticut teaching firearm and hunter safety to over 100 students just last year. I'm a third generation member of the Colchester Fish & Game club where I currently hold the position of secretary. In my professional life I'm a business owner of 23 years in the construction industry.

I think we all will agree that the recent tragedy in Newtown was a horrific act carried out by a very disturbed individual and the feeling that something needs to be done to prevent something like that from ever happening again is felt by everyone.

The immediate response to this horrific act has been to propose new and stricter gun laws to the long list of laws currently on the books as well as the banning of some firearms completely and the heavy taxation on ammunition.

All the laws currently on the books weren't able to stop the Newtown shooting and adding new laws won't stop the next shooting from happening, if not with a semi-automatic firearm than possibly with a pistol or shotgun. If some disturbed person were to drive their car into a school playground killing innocent children would we be discussing legislation banning cars? No.

I don't have the answer to what makes someone do what they did at the Newtown school but by taking guns from the hands of legal law abiding citizens is not the answer. Taxing ammunition at 50% will not stop the next shooting but it will make it more expensive for every gun owner to enjoy the sport while the government profits. Mandating gun owners carry liability insurance is just as ridiculous, do you really feel the criminal element is going to purchase insurance? No, but you will again be picking the pockets of the legal gun owners who enjoy the hobby of shooting.

Banning all semi-automatic rifles will not impact the criminals or stop gun violence but it will impact the hunting community who spend thousands of hours every year afield and also spend significant money for licenses permits and other related costs. These are decent law abiding people who enjoy the sport of hunting and pass that tradition on to their children and grandchildren. They are also the same people who will be voting in the next election.

Connecticut has had an assault weapons ban for many years, yet the tragedy in Newtown still happened. Banning guns is a normal knee jerk reaction to what happened, an easy fix in the eyes of many. Let's do the hard work and get to the root of the problem. The gun was just the instrument used in this last act, but the gun by its self is nothing more than wood metal and plastic, it's the person holding the gun that did the killing.

The very capitol where you work is guarded by the state police who are well armed. You will go to work knowing that YOU have protection while taking that same protection away from me and my family. The second amendment says that "the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed" yet with this new legislation you want to do just that, you want to take away or unreasonably tax my second amendment right.

Your task force has a monumentous task ahead. I ask you not to rush into quick fixes that will have little or no impact on crime and violence while at the same time impacting honest gun owners not only financially but by infringing on our rights. I wish you all the best in this difficult task.

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