

From: John Kornegay, PhD, Barkhamsted, CT

To: The Chairmen and Distinguished Members of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group of the Connecticut Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety.

Subject: In lieu of personal testimony, thank you for this opportunity to provide my input to the Working Group via this letter.

My name is John Kornegay. I am a 24 year resident of Barkhamsted, I am a retired Navy Captain, I have an earned PhD in Mechanical Engineering, I am retired as President of Kamatics Corporation in Bloomfield, I am a lifelong liberal (at least through the last elections), and I have a Connecticut State Permit to Carry Pistols and Revolvers.

As a liberal, I have always been concerned with the protection of our basic constitutional rights. I have supported laws and regulations that protected those rights and opposed those that restricted our basic constitutional rights, even when I vehemently disagreed with the beliefs of those whose rights were in danger of being restricted.

I wish to make it clear that I am opposed to the myriad of gun-control bills I have seen proposed this month because I believe they seek to dangerously restrict several of our basic rights, and not just our Second Amendment rights. All the bills I have seen claim that either they are aimed to prevent another tragedy such as recently occurred in Newtown or that they are aimed to reduce crime and increase public safety in general. However, not one bill that I have read has provided any evidence that the actions proposed have been demonstrated to either reduce crime or increase public safety. Some, in fact, have been demonstrated in other states and countries to either have no effect on crime or to actually increase crime. Others, such as bills to tax lawful activity or violate the privacy of permit holders are not even concerned with crime and have only the effect of discouraging lawful, protected activities. What they all have in common is that they all seek to significantly restrict the rights of Connecticut citizens.

Department of Justice data has shown that in the past 20 years, the rates of murders and other violent crimes nationally have been vastly reduced, although in certain locales violent crime did not decrease. Something must have been working during this period overall, and not working in some areas, and we should understand what works and what doesn't before we rush to implement new "solutions". During this 20 year period, very few gun control laws have been passed except in very localized areas. Instead many older gun control laws have been relaxed or rescinded. As an engineer I know that correlation alone does not prove causation, but I also know that causation requires correlation. If a lack of gun control causes an increase in crime, then we should have seen such an increase in the past 20 years and we did not. Instead of rushing to implement draconian regulations that typically affect only the law-abiding, I pray this committee and the full Legislature will first look to see what has worked and what has not, and only then should well thought out, effective legislation be put forth and passed. Across the country, and especially in our neighbor to the West, we seem to want to legislate based on emotion instead of effectiveness, resulting in basically flawed and probably unconstitutional legislation. We should not make that mistake in Connecticut.

The proposed gun-control laws do have one thing in common – each would infringe on my rights in some way. I recognize and respect that there is significant precedent for infringing individual rights for a demonstrable common good. However, I believe that the benefits of the trade-off must be incontrovertible, and the danger to the common good must be especially great, before we infringe on those rights. Infringing on my rights because “what could it hurt, and it might help” is, to me, not an acceptable trade-off.

It is particularly galling that most of the gun control bills are merely more severe versions of the gun control laws already in force in Connecticut. Many of the authors of these bills proudly point to the fact that Connecticut already has some of the most stringent gun control laws in the country. Tragically, not one of those gun control laws was able to prevent the tragedy at Newtown. Sadly, not one of the proposed gun control laws would have prevented the tragedy either. That is not a memorial we should be proud of.

You ask me to give up more of my rights, even though you admit that criminals will not be affected. You ask that I accept ever greater obstacles to exercise those rights you want to allow me to keep, even though criminals cannot be prosecuted for ignoring many of those obstacles, such as registration. You ask me to pay ever greater taxes to exercise my rights, even though you admit that criminals will not pay those taxes. I ask you first to be as sure as is humanly possible that my sacrifice will, in fact, increase the common good before you rush to action. So far in the bills proposed I do not believe this has even been attempted, let alone demonstrated.

Thank you for the chance to voice my opinions.

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