

I am a law-abiding citizen and responsible gun owner, residing in Windsor Locks, Connecticut.

I am saddened by the tragic events in Newtown, Connecticut, but new restrictions on lawful and responsible owners are misguided. Violent crime with firearms declined since the Federal "assault weapons ban" expired in 2004. Connecticut imposes some of the most restrictive laws concerning firearms in the nation. The shooter in Newtown ignored these laws. Criminals, by definition, ignore the law. Unfortunately, the State rarely prosecutes those that ignore, and are arrested for violating, firearm laws in Connecticut.

The following information is found in OLR report number 2007-R-0442, entitled "Case Statistics for Firearm Violations for the years 2001-2007":

CARRYING PISTOL WITHOUT A PERMIT (CGS § 29-35(a))
58% of the people arrested were not prosecuted.

ILLEGAL POSSESSION OF ASSAULT WEAPON (CGS § 53-202c)
47% of the people arrested were not prosecuted.

USE FIREARM TO COMMIT A CLASS A, B, OR C FELONY (CGS § 53-202k)
72% of the people arrested were not prosecuted.

STEALING A FIREARM (CGS § 53a-212)
73% of the people arrested were not prosecuted.

POSSESS FIREARM OR DEADLY WEAPON ON SCHOOL GROUND (CGS § 53a-217b)
83% of the people arrested were not prosecuted.

CRIMINAL POSSESSION OF PISTOL OR REVOLVER (CGS § 53a-217c)
55% of the people arrested were not prosecuted.

In total 26,725 people were arrested for firearm violations between 2001 and 2007, and **71%** were not prosecuted.

Please oppose all legislation that restricts the liberty of law-abiding gun owners. Instead, work to enforce the gun laws already in effect.

I also write to you in opposition of the current gun control proposals and in particular the proposals by State Senator Beth Bye. I feel the vast majority of these proposals will do nothing to deter, prevent, or inhibit acts of violence in the state of Connecticut.

According to her page on the State website, Senator Bye wishes to introduce a bill that will make it illegal to possess firearms capable of accepting magazines which hold more than 10 rounds, modify the definition of an "assault weapon" to include only one feature (the current "assault weapon" ban includes 2 features), impose a 50 percent sales tax on ammunition and magazines, and prohibit online ammunition sales.

On the issue of 10 round capacity limits for firearms, an event in early January involving

a mother from Loganville, Georgia addresses this very issue. While home with her 2 children, the mother heard knocking on the door; not expecting anyone, she looked out to see a man she did not recognize and decided not to open the door. The man then went to his car to get a crowbar while the terrified woman called her husband, the police, then gathered her children and a .38 caliber revolver to go hide in a nearby closet. The man, Paul Slater, successfully entered the house and made his way into the room where the mother and her 2 children were hiding. When he opened the door, she shot him 5 times in the chest, face, and neck. Slater survived, but the woman and her kids were able to make it to safety at a neighbor's house. How many rounds would have been enough? What if more than one intruder were involved? These questions are for the individual to answer, not the government.

The second amendment does not protect our right to hunt deer; it protects our right to self-preservation and the preservation of our family. Arbitrarily deciding the number of cartridges a law abiding, tax-paying citizen can have in their weapon does nothing to enhance the safety of that individual or their family. In the story of the Loganville mother, the only person that benefitted from being armed with fewer than 10 rounds was the criminal.

Currently, the Assault Weapon Ban in CT defines an assault weapon as being any semiautomatic firearm with a detachable magazine and 2 or more items from a list of features. If Senator Bye has her way, this definition will be changed to include only one feature. This would turn thousands of law-abiding citizens into felons overnight for features that do not actually do anything to make the gun more deadly. Almost everything on the list of features contributes to the ergonomics of the gun: adjusting the length of pull, changing the center of gravity to make the gun more stable, and enhanced control of the firearm to name a few. Arguably, most of us are safer with these features as they enable the gun to be modified to fit almost any body size, type, and strength. Eliminating features that make a gun more comfortable and controllable while shooting will have the opposite outcome than the law intended.

In my opinion, the most unreasonable of all actions in Senator Bye's bill is the 50 percent tax on ammunition. Mass violence is committed by sociopathic individuals exhibiting extremely unstable psychological behavior, not by affordable ammunition—and anyone who shoots will agree, ammo is not cheap. Not a single disturbed would-be mass murderer is going to wake up in the morning and say to themselves "tax is just too expensive on ammo, I'm not going to slaughter people today". Nor do I believe it will affect everyday gun violence on the streets by gangs and criminals who fund their operations using illicit money. The only people such a tax will affect are the law-abiding tax payers. The people we say this gun legislation is not about hurting. How many good people will be able to afford weekend trips to the range with their friends and family? How many people will be able to afford to shoot competitively? How many new gun owners will afford to practice enough to become proficient with a firearm and thus an asset to their home security? Does all this sound "reasonable" or like "common sense"?

Again, my stance is against Senator Bye's desired gun control bills, and all similar proposals. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
John Petersen