

January 25th, 2013

Dear Connecticut Legislators,

I respectfully submit my testimony on the upcoming firearm safety debate post the tragic events in Newtown one month ago.

As background, I would like you to know that I hold a current permit to carry pistols & revolvers in Connecticut and am a former member of the National Rifle Association.

The key issue for me in this debate is safety. This is the very same stated concern of the NRA. The division between my views and those the NRA seem in microcosm to be reflective of the split I have observed in conversation about this issue with family, friends, and neighbors. To me, the framework for resolution on the divisive issue has to revolve around the issue of individual rights vs. public safety. Where do the elected officials of the people have the right and DUTY to enforce the public good though reasonable legislation on individual behavior to protect and serve the public that elected them?

After this horrific event, it is all too easy for many to call for unreasonable and ultimately unworkable things. Throughout history weapons have evolved and will continue to evolve. I do not believe they will ever be eliminated from society. The gun itself was often known as "the great equalizer" leveling the individual advantages of physical size who might use that advantage to the detriment of the community -- that was and is a benefit to the community of the good -- a place where size of your ideas matter. Weapons are not going away as long as protection of the individual's life, liberty and pursuit of happiness remain a doubt. Military protection of the community was rightfully funded by the people, through its government. The technological imperative was, and continues to be, the development of weaponry to eliminate and terminate an enemy threat as quickly and as efficiently as possible. The fundamental question to me is why would we the people allow military weapons into our community?

What is the threat? And, once answered are there other ways of addressing the threat? I regard the 2nd Amendment to the Constitution with the utmost respect but I believe the founding fathers would be disgusted by our current interpretation of it. If assault weapons are deemed necessary by a community we can regulate them to the militia. Through their vote individuals can participate in the decision for the community to form and fund these regulated environments. Perhaps we should debate bringing back armories where community militias can muster and practice under regulations that ensure safety but we certainly should not allow individuals access to the firepower that compromises public safety and peace officer effectiveness. We need to act now to stop the spread of the firepower into our communities. We need to act now to regulate the aspects of gun ownership that ensure public safety without the elimination of individual freedoms. We need to act now to expand the discussion on group ownership rights which I see as a militia vs. individual ownership rights which I see as a privilege.

I truly believe that the regulations proposed CAGV are reasonable and I ask you as servants of the public good to support their efforts to make all Connecticut communities safer for law enforcement personnel, our children and ourselves.

Sincerely,

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