

Written Testimony

Public Hearing

January 28, 2013

My name is Joshua Thompson and I am the Director of Education and Youth for the City of Bridgeport and I reside at 3250 Fairfield Avenue.

“By our readiness to allow arms to be purchased at will and fired at whim... we have created an atmosphere in which violence and hatred have become popular pastimes.”

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Too many of my and our friends and family have died due to gun violence. The children whom I was appointed and sworn to protect are in danger.

I have walked and served in the streets of Newark, Washington D.C. New York City, and now Bridgeport and for the first time there seems to be an end in sight. I can finally see the day coming where I will ask the question to our youth of whether or not they have seen or experienced gun violence and the hands will not rush upward.

There are things our children see that are out of our control, but to all those legislating this matter, my friends this is in your control and we demand you control it.

We have cracked down on library books, cell phone calls, e-mails, fertilizer purchases, and wearing shoes in the airport, but we have done almost nothing at the state level to make it harder for either a terrorist, regular citizen turned armed robber, or young person to get their hands on a handgun.

It was not more than one week after my wife and I moved to Bridgeport before I got the first phone call that there was a murder by gun violence a couple blocks down the street from my

wife's school. As people were shooting it out; guided reading seemed a little silly but the school rejoiced that the armed individual was apprehended.

And it was this Christmas where we celebrated the recovery of a 17-year-old student who attends Bullard Havens after being shot by a 16 year old. These are things that we should all be so ashamed of celebrating. We are here today to push for the celebration of putting an end to this third world country-wild west mode of operation.

I would like to turn my focus toward the lunacy of assault weapons. To defend as a right to own a military assault weapon is as absurd as me testifying for my want and right to purchase a military tank at my local car dealership so that I can drive to work every day. If we are going to continue to claim to be the world's greatest society and democracy we must prove that we do not need mass murder weapons to be legal to uphold this ideal society.

This is not a partisan issue; this is a common sense issue. Sandy Hook joins the list of too many tragedies and the list of too many of my classmate's names in Newark, taken by something we have not had the guts to take on.

I would like to request that we enact the following:

- Strengthen the assault weapons ban by requiring that all weapons having military features be banned and that existing weapons defined as assault weapons be destroyed, turned in to law enforcement or removed from the state.
- Ban large capacity ammunition magazines of more than 2 rounds and that existing magazines of more than 2 rounds be destroyed, turned in to law enforcement, or removed from the state. New York State has just adopted law that established the 7-round limit, which is a small step in the right direction.
- Require permits and universal background checks on ALL sales and transfers of guns, including long guns.
- Make gun owners liable for negligent storage if any person gains access to firearms and injures himself or another person or causes damage to property. The violation would be a Class D felony.

- Ban the right of way for transportation of firearms and ammunition bought over the Internet.

Respectfully,

Joshua Thompson