

Good morning, Task Force Committee Members, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Kari Bley. I live in Westport, Connecticut, with my husband and three daughters, 7, 5 and 2.

I am speaking today to urge you to pass the legislation proposed by Connecticut Against Gun Violence.

The recent shootings in Newtown, Aurora, and so many others has lead me to become an active voice in asking my government to please put gun regulations that will protect my children, and countless others.

It is still hard for me to believe how these lethal weapons –the necessary component in these mass murders, can come so easily into the hands of the dangerously mentally ill and those with criminal backgrounds.

We may not be able to determine which criminals or which mental illnesses lead to mass murder but we can be absolutely certain that military-grade assault weapons are tools that kills, and that no civilian should have the right to possess them. Guns are the second leading cause of death among young people in America, far outpacing deaths from cancer, heart disease, infections, or any other medical cause. Among all the leading nations of the world, only the United States has such a criminal record. We must take bold action to reduce these senseless deaths and to protect our children!

I respect and believe in the 2nd Amendment – the right to own and use firearms in a safe and reasonable manner, for hunting, sport shooting or self protection.

But military-grade guns and magazine clips belong in the military and law enforcement, not among America's civilian people. Hunters and other responsible

firearm owners – indeed many members of the NRA – support bans on assault weapons and high capacity magazine clips and favor mandatory registration, permit, and universal background check requirements.

The “no grandfathering” provisions of Connecticut Against Gun Violence’s proposed legislation are absolutely critical to making the proposed gun safety measures a success. I would suggest tax deductions for returning banned weapons to compensate for owners’ economic loss, and reasonable rather than draconian penalties for violation. But lethal assault weapons and high capacity magazine clips must be kept out of Connecticut.

Please follow your legal and moral imperative to respond to the all gun violence tragedies with courage, hope, and bold action. Put the safety of our children and of the public first by passing Connecticut Against Gun Violence’s proposed legislation.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Kari Bley