

Kathy Calnen, Stonington, CT

Jan. 26, 2013

Dear Members of the Task Force Committee,

The day after a 20-year-old gunman killed 20 children and six adults with a Bushmaster AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, a package containing 3,500 bullets was delivered to a friend's Stonington home. The bullets, which were shipped to the wrong address, were in a large box containing Christmas presents. I wondered how could this happen? I went online and discovered that I could purchase ammunition...next day delivery...no signature required. That was the moment I realized our state's gun laws need serious reform.

I support the proposals submitted by CT Against Gun Violence and urge you pass legislation banning online ammunition sales, require background checks for all ammunitions sales, adopt a stricter assault weapons ban and require mandatory gun safety and storage classes.

Today, you will hear from individuals who will identify themselves as law abiding gun owners who will argue that none of these measures work because criminals don't obey the laws. This absurd argument would suggest we do away with all laws. On the contrary, gun laws are very effective. The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence reports that the states with the strongest gun laws have the lowest gun death rates. Gun owners are not above the law and they must accept the responsibilities that come with the right to own a gun.

When you are assessing testimony, I'd urge you to examine each speaker's motivation. The National Shooting Sports Foundation, a trade association whose \$26 million dollar budget comes almost exclusively from the firearms industry, will urge you to reject these proposals. Gun owners who erroneously believe that their Second Amendments are under attack will aggressively and vocally express their opposition.

I am a mother who took the day off from work and drove from Stonington to Hartford because I want you take actions to protect our children and our citizens. Most Connecticut residents would happily make sacrifices if they could save even one of the Newtown children or educators. The gun lobby rejects every proposal involving guns and recklessly calls for more guns and points the finger solely at the mental health system.

After the Newtown tragedy, the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence launched a public awareness campaign entitled "We are Better than This."

I believe "We are Smarter than This."

Sincerely,

Kathy Calnen