

**Testimony Regarding
Gun Violence Prevention**

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Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety – Gun Violence
Prevention Working Group
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Senator Looney, Representative Miner, and Distinguished Members of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group:

I am testifying on behalf of Connecticut Voices for Children, a research-based public education and advocacy organization that works statewide to promote the well-being of Connecticut's children, youth, and families.

Connecticut Voices for Children strongly supports measures that restrict the access to and use of firearms, in order to reduce gun violence and protect the safety of children, families, and communities.

Gun violence is an epidemic in the United States, and poses a serious danger to Connecticut's children and families.

The December 14th shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary shocked the nation and highlighted the danger gun violence poses to America's communities and children. However, America's children are no strangers to gun violence. The United States has the highest rates of gun violence of any developed country.¹ In 2010, 18,270 children and teens were injured or killed by guns in the United States.² While Connecticut has one of the lowest rates of gun violence in the country, there is still substantial room for improvement.³ In 2011, Connecticut had 94 firearm homicides, which accounted for 73% of all murders in Connecticut that year.⁴ Furthermore, in 2007, guns were the third leading cause of non-natural death for children in Connecticut.⁵

While the availability of guns was of course not the only factor responsible for the recent Sandy Hook tragedy, according to a recent brief by the Children's Defense Fund, guns increase the risk of

¹See, Max Fisher, "Chart: The U.S. has far more gun-related killings than any developed country," *The Washington Post*. December, 2012. Available at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/worldviews/wp/2012/12/14/chart-the-u-s-has-far-more-gun-related-killings-than-any-other-developed-country/>.

²See, The Children's Defense Fund, *Protect Children, Not Guns – Key Facts*. January, 2013, available at <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-data-repository/protect-children-not-guns-key-facts-2013.pdf>.

³In 2009, Connecticut had the fifth lowest rate of firearm deaths per 100,000 persons, behind Massachusetts, Hawaii, New Jersey, and New York. See, Kaiser Family Health Facts "Number of Deaths Due to Injury by Firearms per 100,000, 2009." Available at <http://www.statehealthfacts.org/comparemactable.jsp?ind=113&cat=2>.

⁴See, Simon Rogers, *Gun Crime Statistics by U.S. State, the Latest Data*, December, 2012. Data can be downloaded from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/2011/jan/10/gun-crime-us-state#data>. Data from the FBI Uniform Crime Report.

⁵Behind automobile accidents and poisoning. Data available on the National MCH Center for Child Death Review website at <http://www.childdeathreview.org/statisticsCT.htm>.

accidents or violent incidents resulting in serious injury or death.⁶ In fact, the same day as the Sandy Hook shooting, 22 children were stabbed during a violent rampage in a Hong Kong elementary school; none of these children were killed. The contrast between these two incidents illustrates the extent to which the access to and use of increasingly deadly weapons serves to exacerbate the consequences of acts of violence.⁷

Connecticut Voices for Children supports measures that restrict the sale, possession, and use of deadly weapons in order to ensure the safety of our state's children.

Newtown's tragedy is our state's tragedy, and its children are our children. Connecticut has an obligation to take action against gun violence, and to be a national leader in ensuring the safety of children and families.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

⁶ See, The Children's Defense Fund, *Protect Children, not Guns - The Truth About Guns*. January, 2013. Available at <http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/state-data-repository/the-truth-about-guns.pdf>.

⁷ Kevin Voigt, "China attack illustrates U.S. gun law divide," *CNN.com*. December, 2012. Available at <http://www.cnn.com/2012/12/15/world/asia/china-us-school-attack/index.html>.