

Dear Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety,

I am a mom from Riverside, Ct and was a third grade teacher. I am asking our lawmakers to . . .

1) strengthen gun control laws to

a) include mandatory background checks every time a gun changes ownership, like a car registration. Figure out a way to register the millions of guns already out there.

b) If the gun is misused the owner should have consequences whether the owner fired to the gun or not. That should encourage gun owners to take more precautions that their guns do not fall into the wrong hands.

c) The manufacture of automatic assault rifles should be discontinued, we can absorb the economic hit

d) there should be a mandatory buy back program funded by Lottery sales or an added tax on other gun sales

e) the magazines that carry more than 6 (?) bullets should be discontinued and bought back

f) fund the manpower to ensure that these laws are executed, GIVE THE AFT "TEETH" TO DO THEIR JOB, like be able to carry out surprise inspections.

g) not promote teachers being armed - the chances that one of the guns would get into the wrong (little) hands or it misfiring outnumber the likelihood of it being needed to defend the class and would scare students. Would you have to have a drill with armed teachers? What of the cost of keeping the teachers trained to fire successfully? The whole idea is ridiculous.

The advocates of gun rights need to be reminded that we have laws that govern most extreme uses of many everyday items/freedoms like cars, smoking, drinking, dog walking, adults being in playgrounds etc. Laws can be tightened up without taking away their right to protect themselves. They just can't protect themselves with automatic rifles designed for rapid fire. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE! The knee-jerk reaction of far too many 'responsible gun owners' to protect any form of firearm because they feel all their guns will be taken away is simply paranoid and I would like to know what they are basing this fear on in OUR history. The 2nd Amendment was designed to allow early Americans to bear arms to protect against the English crown or militia, back in the days when there wasn't a local police force. TIMES HAVE CHANGED and the need to defend themselves in every way possible should not be considered a right. Are they going to use cannons or plant land mines in their front lawns? Everyone draws the line somewhere and we need to move the line so it does not include rapid fire weapons designed to kill in warlike conditions.

2) AND EQUALLY IMPORTANT, Improve access to mental health services without stigma

a) encourage more medical professionals to enter the mental health field

b) increase the number of centers where mental health services are offered

c) train more social service providers on how to identify and direct those in need of mental health services

d) DO NOT make mental health providers legally have to register those they feel might be dangerous because patients will avoid them

e) DO make it easier to involuntarily commit those patients for longer periods (while this will often scare some patients away it is necessary)

f) review healthcare insurance rules to require companies to include more mental health benefits, some on a fast track.

Most of these things cost money. We need the political will to implement these steps but it is a sane way to move forward and will have any more benefits than just avoiding more horrible school/ public setting mass shootings.

Thank you for your consideration,
Liz Van Duyne