

Dear Members of the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children' Safety:

I implore you to take immediate action to implement stringent gun control measures in Connecticut as spelled out in the legislative agenda of Connecticut Against Gun Violence (CAGV): namely, ban assault-type weapons like the Bushmaster AR-15 used in the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre and semi-automatic handguns, such as the Glock and Sig Sauer, also present at Sandy Hook, as well as the high-capacity magazines that feed them. I also urge you to enact a buy-back or turn-in program that removes existing such weapons. It is critical to contain the millions of assault-type weapons and handguns that will still be owned and available for use when the ban is implemented.

I have four grandchildren, two of whom are 6-year-old first graders. On December 17, the Monday after the Newtown massacre, I read to one of their classes at Washington Primary School in Washington, CT. It was deeply upsetting to see the innocent, trusting, and fragile human beings gathered around me, children like those who had been gunned down at Sandy Hook just three days before. These children, along with all children in the U.S., should not have to grow up in a country where gun ownership and gun violence are out of control.

Let's face it—the U.S. is a dangerous place to live, for children and adults, alike, where a visit to a school, theater, mall, church, synagogue, or mosque—anywhere—could result in death or maiming due to guns. It is time to ban the guns that are used in these horrific shootouts—please find the courage to act NOW!

Besides the real menace of assault-type weapons so prevalent in our society, these weapons take on a dangerous—even glamorous—appeal when replicated in toys. I recently visited a Connecticut bike shop where a Santa Cruz skateboard in the shape of an AK-47 was being tested out by a young boy. (The board has a warning that if carried improperly, it could be mistaken for a real weapon and a danger to the user!) An assault weapons ban would have the effect of diminishing the fascination of such 'toys' for our children and, over time, eliminating a gun culture inimical to the fabric of our society.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

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