

Dear Congressman/Congresswomen of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force,

I can no longer stand silent on the issue of gun control in the State of Connecticut. As my elected officials, I am asking you to resist measures by the anti-gun factions in this state and resist passing legislation that would ban magazines with a capacity over 10 rounds, banning so called "assault weapons", and imposing a tax of 50% on ammunition. First and foremost the second amendment of the Bill of Rights gives me the right to own firearms, and it expressly states this right shall not be infringed. I have no reason to explain why I "need" any particular rifle as the Second Amendment doesn't talk about needs - it talks about inalienable rights that all men have no matter their race, color, or creed. A new AWB, a 50% tax on ammunition, and magazine size limits are clearly an infringement of my rights, and I refuse to be complicit in enacting such heinous legislation by not speaking up against them.

First, history has shown time and time again that bans do not work. We banned alcohol and that only made crime go up, and people still had access to booze. We've banned marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, ecstasy and a slew of other drugs for years, and have nothing to show for the "ban" except wasted taxpayer money and the militarization of our police force. Simply put, bans don't work because the bad guys ignore them while law abiding citizens get stuck in the middle. Connecticut all ready has one of the strongest bans on firearms in the country. The Newtown incident highlights the fact that bans and legislation will not stop a determined individual from committing an act of violence. Some have proposed a one item characteristic definition to define an "assault rifle", but these things do not have any affect on the action of the rifle. A collapsible stock allows shooters of different sizes to make a rifle fit his or her body size, and in many cases is a cosmetic change made by the rifle owner. Depending on the season a shooter may be wearing a t-shirt or 5 layers of clothing. That makes a difference in how you hold the rifle, and being able to adjust the stock is simply part of what needs to be done. Being able to adjust the stock is even more important if there is a 50% tax on ammunition, as no one will want to waste a shot at the range. Some claim having a pistol grip or forward grip on a rifler makes it an "assault rifle". Again this is a nonsense statement made by people who have never held or shot a modern sporting rifle. A pistol grip is simply a different type of grip used on a weapon, often changed for preference because the original grip may be to angled or straight for a shooters tastes. The same applies to a forward grip. For some it is simply easier to use a grip forward of the action to help keep the rifle steady. Others have said a detachable magazine defines an assault rifle. As with my other examples this is untrue. It is simply easier to eject the empty magazine and load a fresh magazine into a rifle than it is to load individual rounds from the action. I hope you all understand what an imposition and infringement of my and others rights a tighter AWB in Connecticut would pose. We are not killers, and do not wish to be treated as such. We did not commit the crime, but you seek to punish us all for the actions of one man. My last thoughts on a tighter or more restrictive AWB in Connecticut lead me to the story of Charles Whitman. Mr. Whitman used a Remington 700 bolt action rifle with an internal 3 round magazine to kill 14 people from a Texas bell tower in 1966. This type of rifle would not be banned by most proposed legislation in this state, yet in the right hands was capable of killing 14 people. Please understand the rifle a shooter uses has little to no bearing on how many people they can kill. If the bad guy plans out his attack, he will put himself in the best possible location to inflict the most possible damage with the least exposure. My point here is that bans never work

as intended, and a determined individual can inflict damage with a one shot rifle. Do not ban the AR-15, or other semi-automatic rifles because the "look scary", have more than one feature deemed to be fit only for "military" use, or because it has the ability to swap magazines readily.

My second point of contention is on the proposed bans of so called "high capacity magazines". As my previous comments have shown a determined individual can inflict a high degree of damage with almost any rifle, no matter how many rounds the magazine can hold. A determined person who takes two hours out of their day can learn to do a magazine change in under 2 seconds, regardless of it holding, 30, 20, 15, ten, or seven rounds. A 10 round magazine would have made no difference in Sandy Hook elementary as the only person armed was the bad guy. The shooter had all the time in the world to change magazines as there was no threat to him. People were hiding behind desks and locked doors - no one attempted to stop the shooter even when he was changing magazines. When considering a ban on magazine capacity I am reminded of recent events in our state as well as other states. Reducing the legal armed citizen to 10 or seven rounds may actually hurt the good guys in the process. Recently a mother in Georgia was defending herself and her child during a home invasion and used five rounds to stop a single bugler in her home. The bad guy was hit 5 times before he finally stopped his pursuit of the woman and her child and left her home. This scenario leads me to wonder what if there were two, three, or four people trying to rob and rape this woman, or worse what if it were happening to my family? A ten round magazine, or even worse a seven round magazine, could be a death sentence for me and my loved ones, as changing the magazine may give the bad guys enough time to reach me and my family because I gave up my 15 round magazine while the bad guys didn't. We need to simply look down the road from Newtown to Cheshire to see what 2 unarmed criminals can do to a family. The Petit family in Cheshire was raped, robbed, beaten, and burned to death. Using the Georgia incident in combination with the Cheshire incident you can easily see how arbitrarily limiting a magazine to 10 rounds might cause someone their life, or the life of a loved one. I hope you can see that a limit on magazine capacity may end up hurting more people than it saves in common self defense circumstances seen around this state and the country. When the bad guys don't turn in or dispose of their normal capacity magazines, but I, the law abiding citizen do, he (the bad guy) would easily have the advantage in a situation where I have to discharge my firearm in self defense. While me or my loved ones spend the time to swap out one 10 round magazine for another, the bad guy could just keep on shooting. Also, the military and police refer to these magazines as 'standard issue' and not 'high capacity' as some do. It's easy to give a scary name to something, but it's much harder to look at the reality of the situations in which it may be used. It is well documented that state and local police have swapped out their trusty riot shotguns for AR-15's with 30 round magazines in recent years. If this equipment that is essentially off the rack purchasing for police departments is good enough for them to use against criminals, then why isn't it goon enough for me? I also wonder how many reports on shootouts the folks who want to limit magazine sizes have read to conclude that I only need 10 rounds to defend myself? I've read them and on average it takes three rounds to fully stop an attack. I guess the legislators who want to ban magazines with more than 10 rounds are also going to ban assaults by four or more people?

My third issue is with the proposed 50% tax on ammunition in this state. What exactly is the purpose of this tax, where is the money going to, and what purpose does it serve exactly? Consider how you will all feel if there is another tragedy in this state like that in Newtown. How will you sleep knowing this state profited from this future tragedy? The idea is disgusting. One hundred rounds of the .223 ammo the killer used sells for \$25 to \$30. The state would have made a tidy \$15 off the tragedy if only this tax was enacted sooner. This tax will do nothing but hamper those trying to defend themselves (or practice defending themselves at a gun range) from purchasing enough ammunition to do so, or at the worst it will send the criminals to another state to buy ammunition for their unregistered and illegal firearms. If I'm paying a 50% tax on ammunition, do I get more representation in the Connecticut Legislature for the extra money I'm paying in taxes? Is ANYTHING else in this state taxed at 50%? I'm fairly certain nothing else is taxed this way, and to single out firearms owners shows a clear bias towards us. Cars killed hundreds, if not thousands in this state yet they are not taxed at 50%. Knives killed more than rifles in this state, yet there is no 50% tax on a knife purchases. More people were beaten to death in this state than were killed by a rifle, so where's the call to tax gloves and shoe's at 50%?

Congressman/Congresswomen of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, I am tired of living in a state and a country where ONE bad person ruins something for EVERYONE! You can't legislate for the lone wolf or mentally disturbed individual. Stop trying to take away my rights and the rights of other law abiding citizens because of one sick individual - we have followed the letter of the law when it comes to firearm ownership and have done nothing wrong. Imposing more restrictions on legal firearms owners will not solve the issue. While recent events in CT have been tragic it is important to remember that the gun is only a tool - a tool that until 2012 was only used to commit less than 4 crimes/murders a year in that state. Please think about what I have just said - according to the FBI, rifles (never mind "assault rifles") were used less than 5 times a year to commit crimes in this state prior to 2012. While the events in Newtown are tragic, they are an aberration in this state, not the norm. The rifle is a tool that can be used for evil, but it can also be used for good. The good citizens of the State of Connecticut have overwhelmingly used the rifle as a tool of good and just actions for years. Do not let one madman override my constitutional rights because he chose to use a rifle to commit a crime. Over 1 million people a year use firearms to prevent violent attacks, rapes, car jackings, home invasions, and robberies. Do not be the person who takes away my right to self defense. Do not be the person to ban a rifle that is used in less than .001% of crimes nationally, never mind how few times they are used in this state. Stop using childrens safety as a means to an end for those with an anti-gun agenda. Now is the time to stand up for the constitution of this country and state, which both say I have the right to own a firearm and use it in self defense if needed. Do not limit my ability to defend my loved ones and do the right thing - vote NO on new anti-self defense legislation that calls itself "common sense legislation to stop gun violence".

Lastly, please understand this very clearly: we in the firearms community are watching this task force and the Connecticut legislature quite closely. If anti gun legislation is

passed we will remember who voted with us and who voted against us. Those who vote for new anti gun legislation will face the full weight of the pro firearms citizenry of this state, and we will do EVERYTHING in our power to kick you out of office. We will work tirelessly to make sure that your anti gun vote is the last thing you do to inflict harm on us, and the State of Connecticut. We will challenge any new legislation based on this states constitution, and the constitution of this great country. We, the firearms owners of this country, have precedent in the last 3 cases the Supreme Court has ruled on concerning firearms. I would tread lightly in any new law or regulation you seek to pass as it can and will be challenged up to the highest court in this country where it will most likely be struck down as unconstitutional.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my comments.

Mark Prestash