

Subject: Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

My name is Mary Hall and I am writing to you in support of much stricter gun regulations. I appreciate the work the task force has ahead of them, work and changes that are long overdue. It is sad and unfortunate that the tragedy in Newtown had to occur for changes to be initiated, but I am hopeful the time is now. However, changes and regulations should go beyond just those to address preventing another tragedy like Sandy Hook, but must also address gun violence against women and children by spouses and boyfriends, accidental shootings that kill and injure children, gun violence by and against youths in our cities, and the number of suicides committed by youth using guns.

I lost a relative in the terrorist attacks on 9/11/2001, in which almost 3,000 people died. While nothing can replace her absence, I support efforts which have taken place which have prevented and hopefully will continue to prevent such tragedies. Some of these may be considered by some as violations of our rights, such as random personal searches at airports, but collectively we accept these measures on our personal liberties as rational and for the greater good of all. It is sad that since 9/11, hundreds of thousands of people have died as a result of guns in the United States and we have not taken action to prevent them.

A gun's purpose is to kill or maim a person or animal. That we have such limited regulations on a deadly weapon seems profoundly wrong. We have tighter regulations on cars, medicines, and many other things that also cause, as a side effect, many deaths, and yet these things actually have a purpose that is positive and has nothing to do with killing or maiming people. Wide-ranging regulations have been introduced over the decades to reduce death rates by cars for varying causes, for example drunk driving laws, cellphone and texting laws, teenage driving laws. The same must occur in relation to gun deaths. No one thing will solve the problem, but many changes can make a difference. I support the following and others :

- Restrictions on types of guns people can own and large ammunition clips. To allow any guns that can spray a large number of bullets in a small amount of time are not appropriate in our society and serve no rational purpose. Lives can be saved. The 2nd amendment is not about any type of gun. For those who feel some right to these guns, one should consider why that is more important than the right to life, liberty and happiness for those who died as a result of these guns and who may die in the future. For some small percentage of our population who think they will need them to defend themselves, please be sensible in considering the extremely unlikely scenario they envision actually happening - that they will actually need to defend themselves and that the weapon will be used as they intend it. Keep in mind that the NRA and its membership, who is opposed to gun control, only represents about 1% of the U.S. population. Despite their money and ability to mobilize their membership, they do not speak for the masses.
- Background checks for all gun sales. These are deadly weapons, background checks are common sense. There has to be restrictions on selling to dangerous or unstable people and penalties for doing so.
- Registration of all guns, with re-registration on a regular time interval. These are deadly weapons. We register cars for accountability, safety and taxes and cars are not deadly weapons. There needs to be more accountability when guns change hands and visibility to what is happening with a gun.
- Restrictions for gun owners who have children in the home – mandatory safety training and awareness of gun ownership risks; stricter lockup regulations; criminal penalties for gun owners who have any type of gun incident involving a child (injury or death). These are deadly weapons. Parents decide to have guns in their homes despite the risks of accidental shooting deaths, suicides or gun homicides by family members. Children have no choice in this decision yet suffer

the consequences, some with their lives, of an adult decision to own guns. Although losing a child is painful and some may think punishing a parent isn't appropriate, the parent or relative who owns the gun is ultimately responsible for that death or injury and needs to be held accountable. Someone needs to represent the children.

- Liability insurance requirements and taxes on guns. Guns cause a large financial burden to our society. Some or all of this cost should be borne by gun owners and gun manufacturers. If it deters people from owning a gun, then there is an added benefit of one less gun that could potentially kill someone.

Connecticut has the opportunity to be an example to the nation on gun control. This is a problem that can't be ignored any longer. What I've suggested above and most gun control measures being proposed are rational and are for the greater good of our society, even if some feel their rights are being threatened. If nothing else, please think of the children and their right to life.

Thank you for your time.

Mary Hall