

Dear Task Force Members:

After reviewing the almost 100 anti-gun bills now under consideration in the legislature, I request that you OPPOSE all of them. I am a retired career state trooper, and I have experienced enough to believe that a citizen should have any and all means available to defend himself when that crucial five seconds of life or death threat becomes a reality.

From the Magna Carta to the grant of King Charles II of England to the colony of Connecticut in 1662, to Article I, Section 15 of the Connecticut State Constitution, the right of personal self-defense has been preserved. Note I did not say "granted," as the right to bear arms and self-defense are God-given and are merely preserved in our historical documents. Indeed, Section 53a-18 to 53a-23 of the current Connecticut General Statutes addresses levels of force allowed in self-defense situations without any specification as to the means used. If I were in mortal danger, I would choose the best, most effective weapon available, whether an AR-15 or a lead pipe. That choice is mine, not the government's. And it is absurd to think that a 10-, 20-, or 30-round magazine will turn a rational gun owner into a mass murderer.

In no historical document have we, the people, ever relinquished or abandoned our individual right to the defense of ourselves, our families or homes. We as a society have merely loaned our personal duty to defend ourselves to the state, and in partnership with the state, to the extent they are able to afford us that protection and do not abuse their authority in the process. We will always retain that right and use whatever means necessary to secure our own safety.

Another issue is that in every case of mass shooting, the use of the firearm was the final step in the murderer's overall multiphase plan. Therefore, targeting the firearm is not the answer. In every case, there were signs and behavioral evidence that the shooter was planning and preparing for his mass murder. In almost every case, those signs were ignored or denied by others in a position to thwart his mission. Prevention of the final event of mass murder by interdicting the potential shooter in the planning and preparations well before he carries out his act is the solution. There must be an effective way to identify and deal with those mentally unfit to have a firearm; or gasoline, matches, fertilizer or fuel oil, for that matter. Regrettably, we short-circuited that process years ago when we closed prisons and mental institutions, sacrificing our safety in order not to stigmatize people with mental problems.

Instead of trying to stop mass shootings at the last possible step by targeting the tool, I hope the legislature will make provisions for institutionalizing or at least reporting to the police those who are clearly a danger to others. As the old adage goes, forewarned is forearmed.

Please strongly support of our Second Amendment rights, and support our Connecticut State Constitution. Our personal and collective safety depends upon it.

Sincerely,

Matthew Tyszka
West Hartland, CT