

Dear Senators and Representatives,

We are law-abiding citizens and responsible gun owners.

We are saddened by the tragic events in Newtown, Connecticut, but we believe that efforts to impose new restrictions on us and other lawful and responsible owners like us are misguided. The fact that gun control is ineffective as a tool to lessen crime is supported by hard evidence.

So-called "Assault Weapons", a label that is itself misguided, have been banned in CT for years and does nothing to stop criminals from accessing firearms. What CT designates as "Assault Weapons" are actually Modern Sporting Rifles used by competitive shooters and recreational shooters all over the United States. True "Assault Weapons" are select fire military weapons capable of fully automatic or 3-round burst AND semi-automatic at the flick of a switch. Such weapons have not been legal in the United States without extensive and expensive paperwork and licensing for decades. Just because Modern Sporting Rifles have the cosmetic appearance of a fully automatic firearm does not classify them as such. Folding stocks and pistol grips do not enhance the lethality of the firearm. They do not function any different than a semi-automatic hunting rifle or a semi automatic .22.

A limit on the purchase and ownership of STANDARD capacity magazines (between 10 and 30 rounds; high capacity magazines refer to those that hold above 30 rounds) would also be ineffective in reducing violence. Criminals will not turn in their magazines or refrain from using them. Many people ask why anyone would need so many rounds in one magazine. It is a fact that in combat or in a self-defense situation, most of the rounds fired will miss their target. In one recent incident in New York City, NYPD fired over 40 rounds at one suspect; he was hit only several times. Since the criminal will always have access to magazines that hold more than 10 rounds, citizens should be able to have the means to defend themselves from those criminals. A ban on STANDARD capacity magazines will only serve to infringe on the rights of those gun owners who obey the law and are productive members of society.

Also, limitations on the purchase and possession of ammunition will not curtail violence or criminal access to ammunition. It will, however, negatively affect gun owners who shoot often. Many shooters will use hundreds of rounds in one range session. Taxing and limiting purchases will prevent legal gun owners from having access to the proper amount of ammunition necessary for daily and weekly recreational and competitive shooting. A criminal will find his ammunition elsewhere and may very well steal it, remember, he will not follow the law.

Since most guns used in crimes are obtained illegally, as were the ones used in the Newtown massacre, since the killer stole them from his mother, more restrictions on any type of firearm, be it handgun or long gun will be ineffective and only serve to limit responsible citizens Constitutional rights. In fact, the Newtown killer tried to purchase a firearm in Danbury and he was denied it because of two week waiting period for background checks. Stealing is already illegal, but that did not prevent him from taking his mothers firearms and using them illegally. Proposed laws do nothing but extend the reach of government and empower criminals who do not obey the law, while at the same time infringing upon our Constitutional rights as law abiding American Citizens.

Finally, consider the loss of revenue in Connecticut when manufacturers and retailers such as Colt, Mossberg, Ruger, U.S. Firearms, Cabelas and others decide to leave the state because of the new laws. Colt has recently opened a new facility in Florida because Connecticut was deemed not friendly to business. Colt has threatened to leave in the past and with another facility already in place, the move would be that much easier this time around. Even smaller gun shops see massive sales in Connecticut and many owners may decide to close up or move out of state. More gun control measures not only fail to solve the problem, but will hurt Citizens and business owners throughout the state.

Your focus should be on strengthening mental health care, improving the quality of data supporting NICS checks (National Instant Criminal Background Check System) and taking a look at the entertainment industry. Providing training for and arming Connecticut's educators is another area that needs to be considered. Texas and Utah have been arming teachers for the past decade with great success. The best way to protect schools is to have armed security on site. If we can have armed guards for our money, why not for our children? Connecticut already has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation, but more laws that restrict Constitutional rights and fail to solve the problem are not what we need. Do NOT pass more gun laws; instead, work to enforce the more than 20,000 gun laws already on the books. Do NOT infringe on the rights of honest, law-abiding citizens like us.

Please uphold your duty to protect the Constitution of the United States and refrain from supporting any further gun control in the State of Connecticut.

Respectfully,

Matthew, Mark and James Cristaldi