

Dear Committee Chairs and Members of the Task Force Committee,

My name is Melissa Chesman and I am a resident of Weston, CT. Although I can't be present at the public hearing on January 28th, 2013 in Hartford, I am writing in support of greater gun regulation in our state of Connecticut to lessen existing and potential gun violence. I am in support, specifically, by the package presented by Connecticut against Gun Violence.

I admit that prior to the Newtown massacre, I had not looked very closely into our town's, state's or country's gun laws. I am horrified, as so many others are, that instead of politicians being allowed to protect our citizens through common-sense measures, we are -- all of us -- being held hostage by a well funded gun rights lobby that somehow has been allowed to dictate law.

Weston, as you know, made national news when our local politicians looked into our 22 year old gun ordinance and wondered if we can do better to protect our citizens. The Selectmen were erroneously threatened via NRA postings. The State Police had to step in. Bomb dogs went through our school before the meeting and, of course, all children's activities had to be cancelled for the evening. I can only imagine the threats that come into your offices and admire your courage and continued attention to this matter.

These intimidation tactics by NRA members are not mistakes. They are very, very good at intimidation to the detriment of our country. Many supporters of new gun legislation did not attend our town's meeting for fear of being targeted by those who met the "call to arm" of the NRA, as no one knew how unstable those particular gun owners might be, and what weapons they may possess. Thankfully it was a very controlled environment but the fear in our town was real.

Many I know don't dare use facebook for their support of more gun control. Many feel our town is now being watched and targeted as we read threatening comments by anonymous gun owners after every article displaying support for any common sense measures. Many are even more fearful of sending their children off to school after the NRA put their scope on Weston. And many will not show up in person at a public hearing, no matter how important they feel new legislation is, because they are afraid they would become targets of what the NRA's hysteria can ultimately amount to. Although those opposed to sensible laws, those not being violently threatened, may be the louder voice in the room as they typically are, so many more of your residents support your initiatives toward anything that will make our state safer. We believe stricter gun regulation is a key component, especially since the sportsmen in our area really have no need for assault weapons that are designed for quite another purpose:

<http://us2.campaign-archive2.com/?u=266682f68d6c0b09e9ef305e2&id=e9806febdd&e=44f9b40194>

I am in support of the measures put forth by Connecticut Against Gun Violence. They are not attempting to violate anyone's rights, but rather are sensible measures that can make a difference actually and yes, psychologically (which is just as important) in our state.

Thank you,
Melissa Chesman
Weston, CT