

My family, like so many other Americans, was devastated by the December 14 massacre in Newtown, CT. While nothing can bring back those 20 innocent children – or any of the other lives lost to gun violence – we can do something now to reduce and prevent future tragedies. We are also devastated, on a daily basis, about the number of lives lost across our country due to gun violence. We need to make a difference now.

The research and data is clear: more guns mean more homicides – states that have more lenient laws and higher rates of gun ownership have higher incidents of firearm homicide. (See e.g., Harvard Injury Control Research: Homicide. Harvard School of Public Health, <http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/research/hicrc/firearms-research/guns-and-death/index.html>) In addition, US gun homicide rate is 30 times that of France and Australia and 12 times higher than the average for other developed countries: we have more guns and therefore more deaths. Connecticut has an opportunity here to stand as a leader in the United States and across the world.

Protecting the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans goes hand-in-hand with keeping guns out of the hands of criminals, drug abusers, the seriously mentally ill and other dangerous people and is who we are as a country. That is why we urge you to pass, in the first quarter of 2013, reasonable, common sense gun safety legislation that, at minimum:

- Requires a criminal background check for every gun sold in America;
- Ban assault & military-type weapons and high-capacity magazines;
- Increase the penalties for gun trafficking, including real penalties for “straw purchasers”

In addition, we ask you to support legislation that requires a waiting period for every gun sold; requires private insurance be maintained for guns; raises the purchase age to 25, provides for a state-financed buy-back program and provides better support and treatment programs for those with mental illnesses. I strongly oppose any measures that require armed guards in schools or in any way puts additional burdens on our teachers and school administrators.

Enacting this legislation will better ensure the safety of our children, our families and our communities. Do not delay. Act now.

Sincerely,

Nancy Kinahan

Redding, CT