

As a resident of Newtown, CT and unable to attend the public hearings scheduled to take place this week, please see below my testimony to the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's safety.

I am happy to see the state of Connecticut address school safety and the mental health of our local communities. We certainly have some faults in the system that need to be addressed, and we should always be trying to improve our social system. However, I am disappointed with our state and federal politicians who have simply used this tragedy as a means to push a political agenda in the form of stricter gun control. In fact I am disgusted that some officials, including our own president, have chosen to use innocent children in their methods to push these proposed controls. I can only hope that this task force is able to educate our Connecticut state legislature that gun control is NOT going to stop events such as the Newtown school shooting.

Although I could provide numerous examples of gun control not working in addition to a long and length list of innate objects which have caused even more death and tragedy (cars, blunt objects, etc. etc), I am afraid most people are missing the main point of the issue at hand. The right to bear arms is a fundamental right bestowed upon us by our founding fathers. Please take a pause to think of what this means. This is not health care, or legalizing marijuana, or gay marriage (none of which are truly rights in this country yet our politicians argue for vehemently). Nor is this a right to go hunting or to only be able to own guns specifically made for hunting. The right to bear arms is what has made the United States the country it is today. It is largely the reason we have never seen a dictator or monarch, and it is perhaps one of the main reasons the mainland of our country has never truly been attacked by another country.

If we look back at history we have many examples of unstable or insane people inflicting harm upon others. This unfortunately is a fact of life and one that will likely never go away. However, the actions of select individuals should not be a reason to infringe upon the rights of innocent individuals. If we took action against every act of tragedy in society today we would have little to no freedoms. If a mentally unstable person has his or her heart set on inflicting pain and suffering, they will do everything in their power to do so. One only has to look at the Newtown shooting as an example. Adam Lanza did not purchase guns, he killed someone and took them. The lesson learned? Let us not focus on the objects used in the crime, but instead put our focus on the person(s) committing the crime.

We need a better means of identifying mentally unstable people in our society. We also need to admit that these people do not function well with others. We should not be forcing them into the mainstream by including them in the normal school and work system. For some reason we think it is good to have these people socially interacting with others. Instead it provides a drain on the rest of the system and creates unstable situations which can often end in catastrophe.

In addition to finding better solutions for the mentally challenged we should certainly be doing everything to protect the children in our school systems. I can't help but wonder why we have not had a death by fire in the national school system for multiple decades. I am guessing it is because our fire fighters are prepared. We have fire drills, we have fire prevention systems, we have fire retardant materials. We basically have every prevention and protection system in place to guard our public facilities. Why would we be doing anything different against violent crimes?

I hope that this recent formed task force is able to find a solution that is positive for our state of Connecticut. I remind everyone involved with the task force that we must be careful our actions do not have unintended consequences. Gun control is simply not the answer. One only has to look at the cities and states that hold some of the strictest gun laws and see that statistics show even greater violent crime rates than those states with little or no gun control. However, as suggested above in my testimony we have something much greater at risk when dealing with this issue, the rights of our citizens. These are rights that protect our people and our great country from threats both seen and unseen. Let's focus on the real issues and stop using one off tragic events to push a political agenda.

Regards
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