

Dear Honorable members of the Bi-Partisan Task Force on Gun Violence and Children's Safety,

I have spent 9 years as a paramedic along with 13 years in Finance. I have worked closely with sexual-assault and violence prevention groups, mental-health advocacy committees and raised awareness for special-needs people.

The current debate over gun violence has far too much focus on measures which don't reduce or remove the impact of mass shootings, or gun violence. Current and proposed anti-gun legislation has the following flaws:

1. Rapid-fire weaponry is already restricted and removed from the public by the National Firearms Act of 1934. The weapons that have been used in the recent shootings are all semi-automatic, single fire weapons like any other hunting rifle.
2. Reducing magazine capacity would not reduce the death toll in a shooting, and the suggestion that it makes a difference means that we're alright with just lowering the death count, instead of preventing the actions altogether.
3. The current Assault Weapons Ban in Connecticut has not made rifles less-lethal. For example, an AR-15's extending stock or foregrip do not make the rifle more dangerous, but instead make it more difficult for a husband and wife of different height to share the use of a rifle. The "evil features" that are used to identify AWB restricted weapons are purely cosmetic.
4. The 2nd Amendment isn't about sportsmen, it's about maintaining a level of reasonable power within the citizens of the country.
5. Legislation that seeks to publicize the names and addresses of pistol permit holders only serves to provide criminal elements with the information on people who can't defend themselves, and houses where they may steal guns.

As a paramedic who specialized in Pediatric Care I can assure you I'm highly sensitive to the dangers that face our children. Those dangers do not come at the hands of legal gun owners, or certain types of black rifles. Those dangers come from unstable individuals who would wish others harm, and will use a gun, or a hammer, or a car, or explosives to cause violence. Removing guns makes our society less safe, as we have seen in other countries and cities that have passed similar legislation to remove guns from the general population.

Here's my suggestion for legislation that would actually be helpful:

1. Implement policies for medical professionals to be able to provide police and licensing authorities with information on patients who present a risk to themselves or others, and for public safety authorities to ensure they don't have access to firearms.
2. Require all gun owners to have safe storage for firearms in their home. Court rulings have said that citizens cannot be required to lock up firearms, but there should be no impediment to requiring the ability to safely store weapons in safes or "residential security containers".
3. Create a standard for safe schools, including doors that cannot be broken through, proper policies on meeting and checking visitors, and training on how to more effectively deal with unauthorized people who may gain entry.

I wish you the best in finding good ways to protect our children while maintaining every citizen's safety and constitutional rights.

Sincerely,

Neil Caton
Stamford, CT