

Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Noah Baerman and my wife Kate Ten Eyck and I live in Middletown.

I am testifying to the need to seriously consider taking stronger gun control measures in Connecticut.

We are privileged to be part of the so-called “peace posse” that has mobilized to help the Marquez-Greene family put the pieces back together after their daughter Ana was murdered with an assault rifle in Newtown last month. While those who oppose gun control largely stand behind the 2nd amendment, another tool at their disposal is the inevitability of people forgetting or at least becoming more emotionally distant from the horrific nature of this tragedy.

On a selfish level I certainly wish I could forget. I wish I could get on with my life and engage in enjoyment and escape the way I did before December 14. I wish I could go hours without thinking about what happened that day. The reality is that none of us who are seeing the impact up close will return to life as we knew it anytime in the visible future.

From that perspective I am unable to comprehend an argument in which civilians’ right to own assault rifles and high-capacity ammunition magazines is somehow more important than children’s right to be protected from a level of carnage that would be implausible without these weapons. If I step outside of myself, I can see how this extraordinarily selfish and irresponsible argument could be made if the victims are abstractions and not murdered children leaving behind irreparably broken families. I suppose I can even understand how people might concoct wild conspiracy theories that rub salt in the wounds of the bereaved, as in this way the conspiracy theorists can hold on to their views about gun ownership by simply dismissing the violent reality that so clearly contradicts those views.

We do not have the luxury of being able to dismiss anything. The reality of this loss and its brutal and senseless nature are oppressive and always present. I encourage a healthy debate on the nuts and bolts of specific policies, but for the sake of the many people shattered by this unnecessary loss, I beg all of you not to lose sight of how intense and urgent the need is to do something to protect our brothers, sisters and children from these dangerous weapons.

Thank you very much for your time and attention.

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