

Bipartisan Task Force to Prevent Gun Violence

Dear Elected Officials:

I have been a police officer in the State of Connecticut for most of the past decade. During this time, I have responded to many incidents and investigated a variety of crimes, including gun violence. However, I cannot recall a single instance where firearms legislation acted as a deterrent to crime, or would have prevented a crime from occurring. It has been my experience that violent offenders are not concerned with laws prohibiting weapons or ammunition. Therefore, it is my belief that additional restrictive firearms and/or ammunition legislation would not have a substantive effect on reducing crime, promoting public safety, or preventing another Newtown-style shooting.

Although we are all profoundly saddened by the tragedy of Sandy Hook Elementary School, we must objectively realize that Adam Lanza violated numerous Connecticut firearms laws, all of which had no preventative effect on the tragedy. Let us consider that Connecticut already has some of the most restrictive firearms laws in the nation, including the Assault Weapons Definition (53-202a CGS) and the Possession of Assault Weapons Prohibited (53-202c CGS). These laws, similar to expired federal laws, have likely failed to prevent crime. On September 13, 1994, the Federal Assault Weapons Ban went into effect. Ten years later, the Federal Assault Weapons Ban was allowed to expire. Consideration was given to renewal, however, a 2004 Department of Justice Study concluded, "This effect (renewal) is likely to be small at best and possibly too small for reliable measurement" (Koper, 2004). An extension of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban was not sought because it was believed to lack a measureable effect on crime.

As a police officer, it is my duty to be proficient with firearms, including AR 15-type rifles. The majority of my firearms skills are acquired independently from my police department and require the use of my own equipment, including firearms and ammunition. It is therefore my sincere belief that the proposed restrictive firearms and/or ammunition legislation would severely inhibit my ability to maintain firearms proficiency. Consequently, I believe that all proposed restrictive firearms and ammunition legislation would adversely affect public safety.

From a police officer's perspective, I strongly urge you to oppose any restrictive firearms and/or ammunition legislation.

Respectfully,

Officer Alan Clark, MPS

Reference:

An Updated Assessment of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban: Impacts on Gun Markets and Gun Violence, 1994-2003 Report to the National Institute of Justice, United States Department of Justice, Christopher S. Koper, 2004.