

Senator Martin Looney / Representative Craig Miner

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Governors Task Force on Gun Violence & Children's Safety

Subj: Gun Violence and Children's Safety Task Force / Gun Safety Committee

My wife and I applaud Governor Malloy for establishing a task force for reducing gun violence and improving the safety of our children. We also support the members of the three task force committees which are to hold hearings and formulate legislation to meet his objectives. We hope the committees move swiftly to these ends.

It's about time, ...and we wish Connecticut had come forth by now and had adopted strong controls like the state of New York. We can't afford to "study in depth", digest issues and proposals, and evaluate everyone's special interests. The people of Newtown, and all CT residents with children and grandchildren in schools deserve timely and decisive action to prevent another similar tragedy. All sensible people already know what can be done NOW.

There's no question that large capacity clip and universal background checks are critical, as well as closing loopholes like unlimited private sales at gun shows with no requirements between the seller and buyer.

But for my wife and I, the sensible thing to do immediately is to ban the high capacity, rapid fire assault type weapons, the tools designed for war. Before another event like Newtown happens again, let us get these off the streets and out of the hands of irresponsible people, ...NOW !

Weapons of war have no useful purpose for home protection, sporting or competition events. It seems the only proponents for assault rifles are the "fringe" element, those who claim the 2nd Amendment gives them the right to strap their rifles to their shoulder while they walk down Main Street.

If these citizens want to exercise their 2nd Amendment rights to wear, own and use these weapons for protection, competitions, or sporting events, ...then the rest of us also have the right to demand these weapons be strictly secured by their owners. Even if these weapons have been stolen or resold, and then used in the act of committing felonies by someone else, sane or insane, the registered owner must be held accountable for negligent custody of his weapon.

We have two suggestions for the Gun Safety Committee regarding ownership negligence:

1 **Enact legislation that requires owner registration and responsibility for the security of all owned guns, with an increased level of responsibility to safeguard those weapons considered high capacity, rapid fire, assault type rifles primarily designed for a war battlefield.** (Grenades and grenade launchers are also included !!)

A shooter using an assault type weapon who commits a felony AND the owner from whom the weapon was bought, borrowed or stolen should be equally at fault and equally criminally liable. This law would be a powerful motivation for the every gun owner to store these assault weapons in a truly safe and impenetrable container.

Note: I have wondered from the beginning of the Newtown tragedy, that if Adam Lanza's mother had NOT been a victim in this horrific event, would she now be criminally liable for the actions of her son Adam who allegedly removed these weapons from his mother's house without permission and then mercilessly took the lives of 26 children and adults.

From what I've been able to find out, she would not be criminally liable; there would not be enough "negligence" evidence on her part to charge her with involuntary or complicit manslaughter. This law has to be upgraded to hold the owners as well as perpetrators accountable when weapons of war are used to kill innocent citizens.

2 **Enact legislation that limits the use of assault-type weapons only within the confines of a state approved organization or club, which has been certified and is periodically inspected by state or local police.** The club leadership would be responsible to maintain safety, training, and proper use of these weapons for their members, and only after in-depth background criminal and mental health investigations of these members have been conducted and certified by the state or local police. All of this would be funded from membership fees, not from state or local tax monies.

Assault-type weapons could be used only within the club's property for competition or sporting events sanctioned by the club and by state or local police. The location and design of the club's facilities would have to be approved by local and/or state authorities. The weapons cannot be removed from club property by members under the penalty of law.

I want to emphasize that the committees' members should not appear to be dragging their feet on their deliberations. Delaying tactics are well known and are encouraged by the NRA leadership. Such tactics by the Governor's committees will not be tolerated and will cause sensible voters to be suspicious of the committee's real motives.

The children lost at Sandy Hook and their families deserve better; all CT school children deserve better, and they deserve it now,not six months from now.

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