

Hello,

I am one of many thousands of lawful gun owners in the State of CT. I have been involved in recreational shooting sports for the past 30 years. I carried a firearm daily in my former job as a police officer until my retirement and I have spent mostly all of my adult life protecting the public. I was and still am deeply affected by the horrific tragedy that occurred in Newtown on December 14, 2012. I have a sincere desire to see that nothing like that ever occurs again. But I am also wary of gun control measures, some of which I have already heard proposed which do not appear to serve any useful purpose as to the prevention of violence. For example, two recently submitted ideas, taxing ammunition at a 50% rate and requiring liability insurance for gun owners do nothing to increase public safety, rather they are thinly veiled attempts to discourage gun ownership and participation in legal shooting sports such as skeet shooting, hunting, and target shooting to name a few. I am hoping that your task force has the wisdom to see through many of these ideas that will come up which have little violence reduction merit. Please remember that the great majority of those who will be affected by any legislation that ends up being enacted further restricting firearms will be the law abiding folks who own them for hunting, shooting sports and self protection. With all that being said, I am not a member of the NRA and I do not agree completely with their stance on some proposals, here are some suggestions that I believe WILL make a difference and make things safer.

- I believe that record checks should be conducted for ALL firearm sales in CT. I do not see a necessity for a permit for long guns, but an "instant" background check should be the minimum required, including private sales.
- A better connection to mental health information for these background screenings. This could be mandated information provided by physicians to the State Police. Info could be made exempt from FOI Laws.
- Mandate secure storage of firearms within a home, if not being carried legally upon a person. Require a safe, locked cabinet, closet, or some locked requirement. This would have an immediate safety benefit and may have prevented what occurred in Newtown. There is technology available that would allow someone to gain access a firearm quickly for self defense if required.
- Increase the penalties you have currently in place for people that lie on applications, buy guns for felons etc..... and make sure they are prosecuted.

Additional gun restriction laws such as yearly registrations and fees or outright bans in my opinion will do little to reduce gun violence in CT. The ideas that I listed are not just "feel good" proposals, but they will have an impact and increase safety in my opinion.

You have an important job ahead of you. I will ask you to carefully consider the recommendations that you will make. I said from the start, I would like to make sure something like what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School should never happen again. It is a multi-faceted problem that extends to violent themes in the media and video games, better mental health treatment and tightening up some of the current gun laws as I suggested above. None of this will be effective if we fail to look at the root of the problem.

The citizens of CT deserve to have legislation that truly increases their safety. I have been following the recent legislative debacle in NY and what they ended up with was legislation that bypassed important parts of the process, was error ridden and ultimately does not make their residents any safer.

While the process in CT albeit moving quickly, appears to be on its face better than the NY process, the proof to me and many others will be in the recommendations that are generated by this task force.

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to add my voice to this issue.

Sincerely,

Paul Aurelia
Stratford CT