

To: Gun Violence Sub Committee
From: Paul Berger
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I'm a resident of Newtown, and I'm writing to express my belief that we all have a responsibility to take any and all actions to help reduce the likelihood of another tragedy like the Sandy Hook Elementary School mass shooting from happening again. And I urge you, as elected representatives and the people who could actually make a difference on this very important issue to find the wisdom and courage to take some long overdue steps:

Require that all gun purchases must go through a thorough and credible background check and waiting period.

Limit the easy availability of assault weapons that are designed solely to kill as many people as possible

Eliminate large capacity magazines that so effectively facilitate mass murder.

Put reasonable limits on the overall amounts of ammunition anyone can buy.

While no set of laws and regulation can absolutely guarantee that we don't have more episodes of mass shootings, these are steps that surely will help keep at least a few guns out of the hands of people who have no business with such weapons, without putting an unreasonable burden on the legitimate gun owners. And that is certainly a worthy objective most of us can agree on. These are all very reasonable steps that I believe could help reduce the opportunity for people to inflict such terrible carnage like the shooter did in my town on Dec. 14, 2012.

I believe that many of us have become tired of hearing the old argument that *guns don't kill people, people kill people*. That somehow guns aren't really part of the gun violence problem. In Newtown, it is clear that in fact bullets, very, very many bullets (all of those 6 and 7 year olds were hit by multiple rounds) fired from an assault rifle killed 26 innocent people at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. The shooter did not kill all those people with a knife, a baseball bat, or an ice pick. He didn't strangle them with his hands. No. He had a military style weapon with unlimited rounds of ammunition and he used it precisely as it was designed to be used - to fire as many bullets, kill as many people (in this case first graders and their brave teachers and administrators) as quickly and easily as possible.

On Thursday Dec. 13, this individual and his mother could have been the poster family representing the extremists' belief that that there should be absolutely no limits whatsoever on how many guns you can buy, how often you buy them, how powerful those guns can be, how many rounds they can fire without reloading, and how much ammunition you can buy. On that Thursday it was their "right", the argument goes, to have those guns so they could protect themselves. Unfortunately, the data shows that households with firearms are much more likely to suffer injury and death from those very firearms. And the tragedy in this case is that along with the family that owned the guns, 26 other innocents lost their lives as well, just because someone felt they had a "right" to have that kind of fire power in their house. These *were* the law abiding gun owners that we are told must always have an untouchable "right" to acquire and keep unlimited arsenals in their houses. And that are so threatened by reasonable regulation of

lethal weaponry they charge tyranny and whip up fears of an attack on the 2nd amendment. I feel very strongly there is no justification in a civilized and humane society for these types of military weapons and high capacity magazines except on the battle field for war.

This is NOT a constitutional question. Nowhere in the constitution does it say anyone has a right to own the most lethal weapons available. The founding fathers couldn't even have conceived of weapons that could be so deadly, let alone that they should be easily obtained and allowed in the hands of anyone who wanted one, without even the most fundamental review of their fitness to handle such a lethal capability.

I think it's time that we as a society decide to put some reasonable regulation in place with certain guns. Just like we've decided that you can't get really drunk and get behind the wheel of a car and drive through town at 125 MPH. We are not talking prohibition, but we are going to insist on some reasonable limits.

I hope you can muster just a fraction of the courage that the principal, the teachers and undoubtedly some of the children displayed on that terrible day. They had the courage to risk their very lives trying to do the right thing and protect the children. The least you can do is find some political and moral courage to do the right thing when it comes to trying to reduce gun violence.

Thank you for your consideration.

Paul Berger
Newtown, CT