

Ladies and Gentlemen: The truth, or - at least – a clarification is requested.

In the days following the Sandy Hook tragedy, NBC's Chief Justice Correspondent, Pete Williams, reported that according to state and federal officials, four handguns, and only hand guns, were used in the school massacre by Adam Lanza. An AR-15, assault rifle, was taken to the school, but left in his mother's car, the car he used. It was also reported that on December 13, Adam Lanza got into an altercation with staff members of the Sandy Hook School. Also, on December 11, Lanza was denied the purchase of a rifle from a Danbury sporting goods store, because of Connecticut's strict gun laws that require a waiting period before purchase.

The public has been bombarded with political discussion centered on Adam Lanza's use of an assault rifle and on, therefore, the need to ban or limit this type of firearm and the associated ammunition or "feeding devices", in the belief that to do so would minimize or even prevent harm. I say that these efforts will likewise prove totally ineffective. Remember that the Federal ban on "assault weapons" and high capacity magazines in effect from 1994 to 2004 resulted in no significant reduction in injuries or death from the use of firearms. The media reported that the prosecutor investigating the Newtown school massacre recently told a panel not to expect a final report on the shooting anytime soon., and that much of the evidence will be suppressed from the public. Legislation to ban assault rifles and magazines is taking place now, and public anti-gun emotion, with assault rifles at the forefront, has escalated. How can our Legislators make an informed, rational decision, if final information has not been provided to them? Is human emotion being manipulated to move along a political agenda?

I am a conservation and firearms safety instructor, and a former CT Judicial Marshal. I coached a CT Jr. high power competition shooting rifle team for 25 years, as well as a high school competition shooting rifle team for 10 years. Most importantly, I am a father and grandfather who has spent a large part of my adult life teaching gun safety, marksmanship and respect for the use and ownership of a firearm, and a respect for the law. I have never and would never use a firearm against another, except in self defense. I believe harm results from human action; whether the instrument used is a firearm, a knife, a baseball bat or a car or a knife is irrelevant.

Connecticut was originally named the Nutmeg State. The nutmeg connection to Connecticut may come from its sailors returning from voyages with nutmeg (which in the 18th and 19th centuries was a very valuable spice in New England). It is also said to come from Connecticut Yankee peddlers who would sell small carved nobs of wood shaped to look like nutmeg to the local Native Americans and other unsuspecting customers. The original Nutmeg State name carried a tag line for lying and cheating, The state name was changed in 1959 to the Constitution State. Let us not revert to a state of manipulators and liars. Let's fly Connecticut's banner with pride.

I respectfully urge Connecticut Legislators to take an unprejudiced, balanced approach to the gun rights issue.