

I am writing to you regarding the numerous gun bills that your task force will be reviewing in the coming days.

I am a police officer with over 37 years of service. I responded to Sandy Hook on the morning of the shooting, as a result my perspective may be different from the average gun owner who was not involved.

I realize that something needs to be done to help improve public safety, but punishing law abiding gun owners is not the answer and that is simply what many of the proposals do. In Sandy Hook we had a mentally unstable person who was able to obtain firearms. The root of the problem is the mental health issues in our state and country. In addition to firearms availability, there needs to be serious study given to the effects of violent video games and movies on someone who may be mentally on the edge. There are hundreds of thousands of law abiding gun owners in Connecticut. I don't know how many guns there are in the state, but I would venture a guess that the number could quite possibly be one million or more. The law abiding citizens should not be made to suffer because of the acts of criminals.

The draconian steps being proposed such as confiscating magazines over 10 rounds, essentially the state would be confiscating personal property of its citizens, will not help to prevent this type of incident from occurring again. Even if every magazine over 10 rounds could be removed from public ownership, technology exists with 3D printers where a 30 round magazine can be made with a computer. It has been done already and the software is available for download on the Internet. Anyone with a 3D printer and the proper software can create a large capacity magazine or firearm frame with these printers.

Seizing legally obtained private property is wrong. So is requiring the registration of all firearms. Canada tried it for a number of years and just recently rescinded the program. It was unworkable as it was unenforceable. People simply refused to register their firearms in Canada and I see the same thing happening here. If I or anyone else purchases a firearm legally, it is none of the state or federal government's business as to what personal property we own. Gun registration will do absolutely nothing for public safety, as the criminals will not register their guns. Again, you are only punishing law abiding gun owners.

Limiting magazine capacity to 10 rounds in handguns is also unreasonable. Most commercially produced 9mm caliber pistols are delivered with a 14 or 15 round magazine. If you impose a 10 round limit

without grandfathering existing firearms you are costing the law-abiding gun owners money to comply with an essentially ineffective law.

That being said, I am totally in favor of background checks on all firearm purchases. It should not matter if they are between private individuals. There is a definite need to ensure that anyone purchasing a firearm should be permitted to do so. Right now with private sales being exempt, it is easy for someone to slip through the cracks.

I also feel that the statute regarding negligent storage of a firearm needs to be even stronger than the proposal submitted. The proposed language raised the age from 16 to 18 for the secure storage of a firearm. I believe that the language of the statute should also include not only the age portion, but also a section on securing the firearm from anyone with a diagnosed mental health issue and anyone else prohibited from possessing a firearm, such as a felon living in the home.

I realize that you are going to take some steps, but please think things through for the full impact, not just an emotional knee jerk reaction. New York just did that and now they are scrambling to make exemptions for law enforcement that they did not think about.

We have the same issues here. When I responded to Sandy Hook I arrived while children were still being evacuated from the building. I deployed my patrol rifle (the media and many politicians like to call them assault rifles) from my patrol vehicle along with most of the State Troopers arriving and doing the same. We all deployed and performed our missions. The only thing that you need to be aware of is that my rifle and most of the rifles that the first responding Troopers deployed do not belong to the state, they are purchased by the individual officers and are carried with approval of their departments. If you outlaw private ownership of semi-automatic rifles and prohibit magazines over 10 rounds, I along with every other police officer reporting for duty on the effective date of the law with our personally owned patrol rifles will be committing a crime unless there is a law enforcement exemption. You are faced with the same issue with handguns. Currently under Federal law, active duty and qualified retired law enforcement officers may carry a concealed handgun in any state. If Connecticut limits magazine capacities on handguns and does not make a law enforcement (both active duty and retired) exemption, you are facing the possibility of turning a police officer or retired police officer from another state who is simply visiting Connecticut into a felon. I do not believe it is the intent of the legislature to turn law abiding gun owners, police officers or retired police officers into criminals.

Regardless of whatever laws you pass, criminals will not obey them. They don't obey laws related to larceny, burglary, rape, robbery and murder. Do you honestly believe they will obey magazine capacity, gun registration or assault weapon ban laws? Please take the time to seriously consider what you are doing, what you are trying to accomplish and what the end results will truly be.

Thank you for your time and thank you for your service to the State of Connecticut.

Respectfully,

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