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My name is Rick Gott, and I have held a Concealed Carry Permit to carry pistols and revolvers in the state of Connecticut for 12 years now. I know another 150 or 160 men and women who also hold Concealed Carry Permits. We were all appalled by the horrific events occurring at Sandy Hook Elementary School and are in agreement that steps must be taken to help prevent further occurrences of those tragic events. WE DO NOT FEEL THAT PUNISHING LAW ABIDING CITIZENS IS THE WAY TO GO ABOUT THIS.

We have never threatened anyone with a gun, never injured anyone with a gun, and never killed anyone with a gun. And there are thousands of us in Connecticut. We are law abiding citizens. Some of us hunt, some of us shoot competitively, and some of us simply target shoot. We are that group of people who will be most seriously harmed and negatively impacted by increases in the cost of ammunition, a requirement to change-out our standard 15 round magazines, or pay additional fees for liability insurance. We buy our ammunition; criminals and “crazies” steal it ! When you steal something or buy it on the black market, you don’t pay any sales tax !

I am a member of the NRA, but not an ignorant, blind or rabid member. Myself and a lot of other members do not believe that everyone and anyone should be allowed to own a gun. WE FEEL THAT UNSUPERVISED MINORS, CRIMINALS AND PEOPLE WITH DEMONSTRABLE MENTAL DISABILITIES SHOULD NOT BE ABLE TO BUY OR POSSESS FIREARMS. **Not by purchase in a store, not by private sale or gift, and not by buying at a gun show.** To achieve this calls for some carefully crafted legislation to close the loop holes and require all purchasers of firearms to pass a thorough, in-depth background check. THIS LEGISLATION MUST INCLUDE PROVISIONS FOR ADEQUATE FUNDING AND STAFFING TO INSURE THAT THE LAWS WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AND ENFORCED. Failure to fund and staff the new laws will make them as ineffective and useless as the dozens of existing gun laws which are poorly enforced or not enforced at all.

There are some bad people out there. Criminals and “crazies” exist in our society. I own 2 handguns which I hold to target shoot, and to defend, if necessary, my life, my family and my property. You will recall the ‘Cheshire Home Invasion’ where Jennifer Hawke Petit and her 2 daughters were repeatedly raped and killed and their home burned down. If any of the Petit family had been able to bring a loaded firearm into play, I suspect the outcome of that gruesome evening would have been very different.

I am fortunate; I’ve never had to meet lethal force with lethal force in the defense of my life, my family or my property. I sincerely hope I never have to. I am grateful for my Second Amendment rights which allow me to mount such a defense if it becomes necessary. Please don’t legislate in such a manner that makes it more difficult or prohibitive to defend my family, and gives the criminals and the “crazies” even more of an advantage than they already have.

Most Sincerely,

Richard R. Gott