

Honorable members of the Gun Violence task force,

Please be advised that I strongly disapprove of any new gun laws (notwithstanding background checks) on the state or federal level. The use of the Newtown tragedy to further political agendas is shameless and abhorrent and will do nothing to protect the public. Rather, by supporting bills like the ones currently being considered, the ability of Connecticut's citizens to defend themselves would be substantially reduced which ultimately leaves the public far more vulnerable in the face of criminals that we face on a daily basis. It is patently absurd that to combat a threat in which a poorly defended target was attacked, that the legislature of this state would consider bills that would weaken the defensive posture of all other potential targets in the state.

As a husband and father, it is my responsibility to protect myself and my family from harm. Proper use of firearms is the only way to do that. Some politicians champion gun control as a way to protect the public from harm. This however is a substantial departure from logic. The civilian police force is not and cannot be everywhere at all times. They were not there for the thousands of people who have been murdered in Connecticut over the past 10 years and they were not there when 20 angels were taken from us on December 14th of last year, nor were they there when the Petite family members were raped and murdered in July of 2007. By the same token, the police will not be able to protect me and my family from harm when someone kicks in my front door at 2am. This awesome responsibility rests with me and me alone. The laws being considered now have nothing to do with safety or "common sense gun control" as anti-gun politicians are fond of saying. Consider the bill that seeks to limit the number of rounds a firearm can accept to 1(one). Obviously, this bill shameless attempt of nothing less than the total disarmament of the populace.

Other politicians say that "assault weapons" are the issue, and these should be banned. This is also a remarkable fallacy. The AR15 platform is an excellent firearm for both home defense as well as hunting. It has a light recoil making it safer than a pistol or shotgun and utilizes the 5.56mm round which is designed to "dump energy" which, unlike pistol and shotgun rounds prevents full penetration of walls. Because of this, there is little probability of collateral damage to bystanders beyond the walls of the home. Because the AR-15 is shaped like the military M-16 rifle, it is demonized as a weapon of war. Here are a number of misconceived arguments.

- Myth: The AR-15 looks like the M-16, therefore it must operate like an M-16 allowing a shooter to spray bullets.
- Reality: The AR-15 like most handguns is semi-automatic, not fully automatic like the M-16. This means that one trigger pull equals one round fired. The M-16 user by contrast can pull the trigger once and the weapon will continue to fire until all rounds have been expended. This fact is often used as propaganda to make the public think the AR-15 is more lethal than other rifles and handguns.
- Myth: The AR-15 has been used in most mass shootings; therefore it and other "military style rifles" must be bad.
- Reality: The AR-15 is the most common sporting rifle sold in the US. Because of its popularity it would of course be seen more often than not at the sight of a tragedy, however,

removing this firearm would not remove the tragedy any more than taking Mustang GTs off the road would prevent car crashes.

- Myth: The AR-15 has a flash suppressor; therefore it must be a weapon of war whose purpose is to prevent a sniper from being located and neutralized.
- Reality: The purpose of the flash suppressor is to hide the flash from the shooter to prevent the target from being momentarily obscured. This helps the shooter more quickly re-acquire the target. It is not to hide the location of the shooter.
- Myth: The AR-15 has a pistol grip; therefore you can use it to shoot from the hip.
- Reality: Whether or not you have a pistol grip, you can shoot any rifle from the hip, but this is incredibly wasteful of ammunition due to the inaccuracy of not using proper sighting techniques. It is also very uncomfortable because of the ergonomic impact of pivoting your wrist downward toward the ground. I've never seen anyone shoot this way.

Additionally, I'd like to voice my opposition to the idea of banning magazines that hold 10 or even 5 rounds. Governor Cuomo of New York recently held a press conference in which he declared that "no one needs ten rounds to shoot a deer". The governor however misses the point entirely. The 2nd Amendment is not about deer hunting. The 2nd Amendment is a civil right which is based squarely on broader human rights which dictate that individuals have the right to defend themselves from aggression. The government before the current one attempted to take that right away and because of this, the 2nd Amendment was cemented into our constitution. The founding fathers knew the right of self-protection was so important that it is second only to the freedom of expression in priority. The first and second amendments are respectively, the first and last resort that our citizens have against tyrannical government. Do I believe that the current government is tyrannical? Absolutely not, but that doesn't mean that in 10, 25 or 50 years our country won't face some sort of threat. Thus far, our democracy has survived for over two-hundred years and although it's impossible to prove a negative, I believe that this survival has occurred in no small part because our government is mindful of its citizenry and the power they wield through the second amendment. I realize that this argument must seem incredibly abstract in the face of tragedy like Newtown and Aurora but I beg you to consider this. A leader who is mentally ill can kill millions more than a single individual who is mentally ill. More to the point, I would ask that you oppose any initiative to limit the number of rounds in a magazine. First and foremost, 15 and 17 round magazines are very standard capacities in today's handguns. By limiting magazines to 10 rounds, you would be turning most handguns into paperweights and turn their owners into criminals even though they were legally purchased and sales tax was happily collected. Also, in a self-defense scenario, and with adrenalin flowing, it has been shown that only 1 in 6 rounds expended hits the target. Couple this with the fact that there have been numerous accounts of assailants that have continued advancing after being shot 2, 4 and even 8 times. Taking these facts into account, it's easy to see why limiting magazines to 10 rounds will limit the ability of the lawful citizen to protect themselves and their families. Finally, a 10 round limit would not have stopped the most recent tragedy or any other tragedy. With moderate practice, a magazine change can occur in less than one second and the idea that a bystander could close enough distance and overtake an assailant in that short a time is unlikely if not impossible.

Please carefully consider the repercussions of these bills. History is watching you. I am too. Be advised that I will not support or vote for any politician that supports legislation designed to weaken my ability to self-protect.

Kind Regards,
Robert Wagner
Trumbull CT

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