

Dear Fellow Citizens of Connecticut and Elected Officials,

I have been reading, with interest, the exchange regarding gun control. It seems that there are many differences of opinion and many levels of information regarding what constitutes an assault weapon. I found an interesting article in the Wall Street Journal a few days ago that may help to illuminate some facts for those who are uninformed or misinformed. It was written by John Lott, a well respected and thoughtful economist and longtime contributor to the WSJ. The link is located here. Please take a few moments to read it.

http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424127887323468604578245803845796068.html?mod=hp_opinion

As far as the notion of why anyone in a "civilized society" should have the right to possess such a weapon, well, that IS part of the debate. The Second Amendment was designed to guarantee the citizenry the right to keep and bear arms in order to protect themselves from tyranny. That includes domestic and foreign tyranny. When the Bill of Rights was crafted in the 18th century, the authors knew very well that the people would need a mechanism by which to defend themselves from a government that could become tyrannical. Government tyranny was their motivation for fleeing England for America. It was the whole reason for the Revolutionary War. The right to bear arms wasn't created to preserve hunting, for sport or for food gathering. It was designed to provide a means to defend oneself.

As many of you may recall, the United States was attacked by terrorists on September 11, 2001. This makes for an obvious conclusion. We are not, as a country, immune to or safe from danger from outside the borders of our nation. We are not protected by the vastness of the oceans any longer.

Terrorism exists here within our borders. Those that mean to do Americans harm will not be coming to the fight with a baseball bat, or a knife or a revolver. They are here with sophisticated

weaponry. I take comfort in the knowledge that semi-automatic weapons are legal to be purchased by law-abiding, responsible adults. If that sounds dramatic to anyone reading this, I suggest you become educated about the very real threats that exist today.

The massacre in Newtown was a tragedy that was precipitated by a mentally unbalanced young man who spent hours with violent video games and movies. If he had not been able to access the weapons that were used, he would have obtained other means to inflict his wrath. Timothy McVeigh used a rental truck filled with fertilizer to create the bomb that destroyed the Federal Building in Oklahoma City in April of 1995. He killed 168 people, including 19 children, and injured over 800. Again, a mentally unbalanced young man, intent on avenging a "wrong" that had been inflicted on him. I don't recall a national conversation after that awful event to ban rental trucks and fertilizer.

The dialogue post-Newtown must include conversations about mental health, school security, and the impact on society of violent video games and movies, as well as guns. Making snap judgements based on high emotions before these subjects can be discussed in a rational and intelligent manner is negligent. And all Americans should take a step back and remember that we are all entitled to our opinion and we all have the right to express that opinion without judgement or demonization. That right is as constitutionally guaranteed as the right to bear arms.

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Live simply. Love generously. Speak kindly. Leave the rest to God.