

To the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group,

My name is Sarah, and I am a longtime CT resident. I am a daughter, a sister, a girlfriend and an aunt to people I treasure. Likewise, they value my presence in their lives, as well as my safety.

I am also a nature lover, taking the opportunity to walk through CT's varied natural landscapes as often as possible.

In past years, I had a lingering concern about activities surrounding both of these important aspects of my life.

Specifically, when it comes to my family and safety within my own home, there was a chronic "what-if" about home invasions and violent robberies. What if someone broke into the house? What if I were in my own home and someone tried to abduct me? I am confident these worries plague many people.

The "what-ifs" also put a cloud over my beloved walks in the woods and elsewhere. What if a sexual predator is lurking, waiting for the right victim? These worries should not be an issue, but they are a reality.

So with this reality in mind, I was forced to approach my life with a certain level of fear and apprehension. Pleasurable activities and seemingly safe environments had a cloud over them, contaminated with the concern about being a single woman walking alone, or at the house with the window open on a nice summer evening.

Then, I began to read about ways to keep myself safe. Options included installing alarms, learning self defense and other in depth plans. These are valid, but they don't always work and don't always save people in time, or at all. Then, I came upon an approach I hadn't previously considered - arming myself.

At first I thought the concept meant I was somehow violent, unfeeling ... this is not the ideology I was raised with. But the more I researched the topic, the more I understood that having a gun was the path to peace of mind as a woman who is often alone.

I went through the proper procedures, took a safety class, passed the background check, and got my permit.

Since then, I have a renewed outlook on my walking adventures and indeed my times in my own home. After all, nobody knows when the next "bad guy" may be cooking up plans for robbery, rape and more.

At least I know that if I have a gun, I have a chance.

I urge the group to please not strip women like me of the safety that comes with carrying a gun.

Thank you,
Sarah