

## Testimony before the Taskforce on Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety

Ladies and gentlemen of the task force, thank you for taking the time to hear testimony from myself and others. I am speaking to you as a citizen, a voter, and a husband who hopes to be a father. I was shocked and horrified by the events of December 14<sup>th</sup>, but am disappointed by the slant I see the responses to that tragedy taking.

I am testifying to express my strong opposition to the proposed measures to restrict the type and characteristics of firearms and magazines sold in Connecticut, and to express my strong support of proposals to increase criminal penalties, strengthen law enforcement, provide additional security for our schools, and enhance our background check process to both prevent criminals and the disturbed from acquiring firearms and to ensure that criminals who use firearms are not set loose on the streets again.

Many proposals are currently being discussed to restrict or ban the sale of semi-automatic rifles with certain features, (assault weapons in common parlance) and to ban or restrict magazines capacity. Many of these proposals also pose ideas such as requiring registration of firearms, fingerprinting or other cataloging of owners, and so on. I strongly oppose these measures as I believe based on facts that they will have limited, if any, impact on crime and will penalize the majority of law abiding gun owners for the actions of the criminal few, and at a great cost to the State of Connecticut and its taxpayers.

Data from reliable sources such as the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports show that banning or restricting semi-automatic rifles will at best make Connecticut marginally safer. In particular:

- *Nationwide*, only 323 murders were committed with *all types* of rifles (Assault and non) in 2011 – vs. 1694 with knives and 1659 with other melee weapons. There were 6220 pistol murders – Assault weapons are not our big problem, illegal pistols are.<sup>1</sup>
- According to Department Of Justice research study by Christopher S. Koper<sup>2</sup>, only 2-6% of crimes involve an assault weapon, and 49% of those used in crime were purchased via the black market. The study concluded, about the previous Assault Weapons ban: *"Should it be renewed, the ban's effects on gun violence are likely to be small at best and perhaps too small for reliable measurement. [Assault weapons] were rarely used in gun crimes even before the ban."*
- According to another (2003) study by Koper<sup>3</sup>, the average number of shots fired in a shooting incident is 3-4 – well below the proposed 10 round limit. Likewise his 2004 study of the Assault Weapons ban found *"[I]t is not clear how often the outcomes of gun attacks depend on the*

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<sup>1</sup> Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports 2011 - <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/table-20>.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher S. Koper, "An Updated Assessment of the Federal Assault Weapons Ban: Impacts on Gun Markets and Gun Violence, 1994-2003," Report to the National Institute of Justice, United States Department of Justice, June 2004. p. 3, 15, 52, 90, [http://www.sas.upenn.edu/jerry/lee/research/aw\\_final2004.pdf](http://www.sas.upenn.edu/jerry/lee/research/aw_final2004.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Christopher S. Koper, "Impact of Handgun Types on Gun Assault Outcomes: a Comparison of Gun Assaults Involving Semiautomatic Pistols and Revolvers," *Injury Prevention*, 2003;9, p.151-153. <http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/9/2/151.full>

schools funding to put plain clothes security officers in place. Federal Marshals have proven safe in protecting planes, and jewelry stores and other shops regularly have guards on hand – why not give schools the option to protect our children at least as well as we do our possessions?

In closing – while I am horrified about what happened in Sandy Hook, and agree that something needs to change, I do not believe banning, registering, or confiscating thousands or millions of legally owned firearms from hundreds of thousands of Connecticut citizens is the answer. We need to focus our legislative action on the real problems – the criminal and the insane, and our ability to keep them from getting guns illegally and to protect ourselves and our children from their rampages.

Thank you for the time and consideration in reviewing these words.

Respectfully,

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