

**Dear Committee Chair and Committee Members,
My name is Stephanie Wattel and my husband Scott Wattel and I live in West Hartford. I am also a public school teacher in Windsor, CT and I am testifying to the need to seriously consider taking stronger gun control measures in Connecticut.**

December 14, 2012 began as an ordinary day. But, by around [10:00 a.m.](#) my coworkers began talking about a shooting at a school in Newtown. The moment I heard the name of the school - Sandy Hook - my heart started racing. I knew my friends, Nelba and Jimmy Greene had children who attended school there. I immediately began trying to contact Nelba and my other friends to find out if her children were ok. I think I could recite to you verbatim the content of every text and phone call from that day. They are etched in my memory forever. I will never forget speaking to Nelba Marquez-Greene that afternoon and hearing her tell me through tears that her daughter, Ana Grace, had been taken from her in the most horrific way imaginable. You never think something like this is going to happen to the people you love and care about. And when it does, you can't fully process the information because it is senseless. I spent the next two days fully expecting to wake up from the nightmare. But, this isn't a dream.

We can't go back and change what happened that terrible Friday. We can't repair my friends' broken hearts. But, we can honor the victims of this tragedy and their grieving families by taking a hard look at ourselves and our society's gun laws. A weapon of war was used to murder my friend's innocent daughter and her classmates at school. That is unacceptable and it could have been prevented. If we have the will and the fortitude to pass sensible gun legislation, I believe we can prevent a tragedy like this from happening again. We owe it to ourselves. We owe it to our children, and to our students. But, most of all, we owe it to the victims and to their families. They have paid the ultimate price for our society's misguided and irresponsible attitude towards guns.

I don't want to look around my classroom and have to imagine what I might do if I heard shots fired in the hallway. We need to make our schools

safer. We need to make our society safer. We need to start with gun control.

Thank you for your time,

Stephanie Wattel

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