

To Whom It May Concern,

While I fully doubt that my message will be read by any members of your group, I can no longer sit idly by as I keep hearing about your proposals concerning Gun Violence Prevention. The proposals I've heard so far involving the banning of "assault rifles" and "high-capacity" magazines will do little to deter gun violence. The only thing those proposals will accomplish is the criminalizing of law-abiding people who happen to be in legal and Constitutionally-protected possession of said items. There is no evidence that those types of guns and magazines are more likely to be used in the commission of a crime in Connecticut than any other type of weapon. In fact, the vast amount of gun-related crimes committed in the state of Connecticut are committed with illegally-obtained handguns by the "gang-bangers" in the economically depressed areas of the major cities in this state. The only incident that comes to mind that involved an "assault rifle" using "high-capacity" magazines was the recent tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School. However, the perpetrator of that crime was mentally ill and did not lawfully possess the rifle in question.

Perhaps, as reasonable individuals, you should take a step back and look at this in a logical manner instead of a knee-jerk, "feel good" response that seems to be so fashionable within our government lately. For example, the current proposal to limit magazines to a ten-round capacity is totally mindless. What, if any, is the difference between carrying one 30-round magazine instead of three 10-round magazines? A mentally-ill person who, like Adam Lanza, was intent on doing harm, would do that harm no matter what size magazine he had in his possession. As a case in point, the shooters in the Columbine High School incident were armed with Hi-Point rifles. Hi-Point rifles have a capacity of 10 rounds and fire 9mm pistol bullets. Thus, magazine capacity is irrelevant and, as such, should not even be a consideration in any serious discussion on preventing gun violence.

Now, let's consider a ban on "assault rifles." First of all, Connecticut already has a ban on "assault rifles." When the Federal Government's ban expired in 2004, Connecticut's ban did not expire. So, to enact an "assault rifle" ban would be a waste of time because there is one already in place. We should also examine what, exactly, constitutes an "assault rifle." Such rifles are used by the military and law-enforcement agencies. They are capable of fully-automatic firing. That means that multiple rounds can be fired with one pull of the trigger. However, the rifles in question are not fully-automatic. They are semi-automatic, meaning that only one round is fired with each pull of the trigger. And, once again, they are not the weapons of choice for those who commit acts of gun violence in the state of Connecticut. They are, in fact, perhaps the least-used weapon by those committing crimes in this state.

Finally, much of Connecticut is still considered to be rural. In such areas, semi-automatic rifles with large-capacity magazines are often necessary tools for the protection of one's property, whether it be from highly destructive critters or criminals bent on home invasions. There is an old saying that goes, "only a fool blames the tool." Just because one deranged individual misused a tool in Newtown, this Gun Violence Prevention Group should not be "fools who blame the tool." One must consider what the possible outcome would have been in the tragic Petit home invasion if Dr. William Petit had owned such a tool. All of the members of this group have sworn an oath of loyalty to The Constitution. That Constitution includes the rights guaranteed by The Second Amendment. Please do not break your oaths by placing any infringement upon the law-abiding people who legally own, and responsibly use, semi-automatic rifles with large capacity magazines.

I am a law-abiding gun owner....and I vote. Please represent me.

Stephen Schroeder