

To All Members of the Gun Control Working Group;

I submit the following testimony for consideration on behalf of myself, my family, and all law-abiding gun-owning citizens of Connecticut. The tragic crime committed at Sandy Hook Elementary School has made us all victims, and my thoughts and prayers go out to everyone in Connecticut. This heinous act we will never forget, along with the Petit murders, and 9-11.

The Second Amendment is the greatest civil rights law of our land. Any lawful citizen of legal age may legally obtain a firearm for lawful use, including self-protection. Everyone knows that a coked-up user, burglar, murderer or thief are going to pick an easy target; the old, the infirm, the weak or very young. A resident such as these is no match for a young man on a drug high, or any desperate individual that has the audacity to break into another person's home to steal or do harm. Owning personal firearms is the only deterrent that works against violent criminals.

As I try to understand what happened in Newtown, I consider a Mother who was brought up

with firearms in her life and a belief in Second Amendment rights. One who although her own son had psychological issues, chose still to keep firearms in her home so that through her great love and protective instincts, she would be able to protect her son and herself from any possibility of grave danger. This itself

is a responsible, logical and realistic choice upon considering that police often can't

respond in time to the most dire call for help, a fact borne out by the school's own call for help. Nancy Lanza's fatal flaw was somehow her love for her son clouded her assessment of her son's psychotic mental status.

A Newtown schoolteacher

recently gave testimony that many people knew Adam Lanza as a possible threat.

The same thing was said about the troubled young man in Arizona that shot Gabrielle Giffords and those surrounding her. Neither one was psychologically normal or law-abiding. These ill young men went out into society with the sole intent to kill people.

I am sure you all will agree that a person who does what these murderers have done is criminally insane.

Yet, there is a second consideration to take into account, as mentioned in the testimony of the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) who released a 13-point legislative proposal on Gun Control. They stated that "spree"

shootings such as the horrific Sandy Hook crime, are extremely rare. But in the

inner cities of Bridgeport and New Haven, more common shootings take place that usually involve young black males with handguns containing a small number of bullets.

This tells me that certain mayors of CCM are attempting to take advantage of the Sandy Hook media hype, by piling on long-standing inner city problems (which are in reality a failure of

local government to find solutions) in their effort to pass even more restrictive additional limitations on firearm ownership and use under the guise that new laws will make inner-city shootings stop.

Stricter laws such as those in CCM's proposals will do absolutely nothing to impact inner-city shootings or other violent crimes because criminals don't obey laws. The only thing that reduces violent crime is

the knowledge that good citizens are armed. There are statistics proving this is a factual statement. Every interview of criminals also corroborate it - they all will avoid a house that is protected with a gun.

We all know that additional laws are unnecessary when current laws cannot be enforced. Eliminating inner-city shootings is beyond the scope of additional restrictive gun laws because there is little regard for the law in those

circumstances and there are other myriad factors involved, including socio-economic and ethnic ones requiring more than a knee-jerk quick fix.

Chicago comes to mind where the most restrictive gun laws have been enacted for many years yet an element of the inner-city there continue, outside the law to deal drugs, fight over territory and belong to gangs which require killings to cement their bonds. This is not a gun problem, it is a social problem. It would be a good topic for a separate committee.

Lawful gun owners are upstanding members of society who work, pay taxes and vote. They are not the kind to commit a crime or end up inside prison. They are doctors, teachers, firemen, police. Secretaries, janitors, nurses, electricians and plumbers. All walks of life are represented in law-abiding gun owners. Elected officials must not remove rights from these, the best of citizens or all of society will suffer greatly with increased violent crime- especially with our country's economy so dismal and job loss continuing.

However, I am doubtful there is anyone in Connecticut's legislature who is involved with

firearms and that is a shame considering they are a large part of our country's heritage, have enabled Americans to obtain the lifestyle of today and have always been used by good people for defensive purposes. In America we have been blessed in that we have not had to defend ourselves from an invading force for a great long time. It may be the apathy created by our security which brings some

people to think firearms have no place in modern life, but nothing could be further from the truth. When foreign countries are fighting one another in the streets, killing each other and our Ambassadors, raping them and burning them, American citizens can take comfort in their ability to protect ourselves with our firearms.

Mayor Finch of Bridgeport, in his CCM testimony stated he's a fisherman, but has friends who

are hunters who have told him you only need one or two bullets to take a bird or a deer, which is true. But you need lots of ammunition with which to practice to make that one shot good.

Neither Mayor Finch nor any of our elected officials to my knowledge know anything about the many and varied shooting sports that exist today both as hobbies and forms of serious competition. Some of these require many shots and large standard capacity magazines. Don't forget our Olympic marksmen and Ms Kim Rhodes who won the Gold in last July's summer Olympic games and made us all proud. So you see, aside from gun ownership being a right in our country, there are many uses for firearms that are pleasurable, and create good social and community ties and high esteem among individuals, and reduce the violent crime rate in every land where good citizens are armed.

These disciplines require the same drive, concentration and practice as shooting a basketball, golfing a hole in one or bowling a strike, and a noble character, and are even more satisfying because they embody our country's history, family and community tradition, and require a healthy, sane, dedicated and focused mind for individuals to become proficient.

Additional anti-gun limitations and bans are egregious to all law-abiding gun owners and competitive shooters and they do no good, only harm. Particularly when Connecticut already has so many restrictive laws concerning guns already in place. Stronger gun control legislation never stopped anyone so predisposed from committing a violent crime. The much more restrictive proposals we are seeing in Connecticut today are something closer to harassment and disarmament of the citizenry.

Therefore I call upon you all to do the right thing. NO additional bans on guns or ammunition, nor additional gun control restrictions which will do no good in stopping criminals from using illegally obtained guns to harm good and lawful citizens.

If Connecticut wants to become the model for our country concerning guns, it is time for Connecticut to look at a liberal country like Sweden as their model, which requires all citizens to have gun

handling training and to maintain a gun in their homes to keep them safe. The violent crime rate in Sweden is so low as to be completely negligible.

Please look for alternative solutions to the problems of inner-city shootings, those parties whose major claim is they have no hope, so they've created their own "civilization", and spree shootings by people with psychological aberrations. Stop whittling away the rights of lawful citizens. We are the majority, the working class, and we claim our right to own guns.

On top of ALL of the above, Connecticut contains numerous companies inside its boundaries that manufacture, repair, market or sell firearms, ammunition, clothing, accessories, and

peripheral items for use by law-abiding gun owners. Consider this well before proposing a

ban on weapons, ammunition, or limiting the number of rounds in a clip. Many livelihoods and jobs, tax dollars and future votes are dependent upon you to support lawful gun owners rather than giving criminals a free pass.

In closing, I believe that Nancy Lanza would want Americans to continue to enjoy their Second Amendment rights to own and use guns unfettered. I believe that the principal of the Sandy Hook school and the other adults were fiercely protective of their young charges. Fierce as lions. I am sure if they

had been armed and willing to defend, there would have been much less sadness in all of our lives.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Respectfully submitted,
Mrs. Susan D'Agostino
Niantic CT