

January 28, 2013

Public Hearing: **Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention & Children's Safety**

Watching the news unfold on December 14 brought me to tears. It sent my mind spinning in a million directions. How could this happen again? How could anyone do this to innocent children and to our teachers in a safe, rural community in my backyard? How are those moms and dads and brothers and sisters and families going to heal from this terrible loss? How can we help them? What am I going to do to protect my family, friends and neighbors? How can we make changes in our society, to our local and national laws, to help slow this epidemic of gun violence in the U.S.? How did the acceptance of private ownership of weapons developed to kill large numbers of humans become commonplace in the United States? How did we get to the point where even the mention of any limits on owning weapons for mass killing was so strongly opposed?

The list of questions continues to swirl in our heads for so many of us. As I attempt to answer them, I continue to learn more and more about this very sensitive topic. I managed to find a group of wonderfully hard-working women who wrestled with the same questions and share my desperate desire to make change. We are all mothers that want to help empower other people to make a real difference today. We know that this is not an easy conversation. We understand that many of us feel powerless against the money and political power of the NRA and other groups with a vested interest in gun sales. We need to remind ourselves that there are **many more of us than them.**

Gun violence in the U.S. will never end as long as there are as many guns in private hands as there are people in the U.S., and it won't diminish until we figure out a way to develop a strong voice for all of us like-minded people. We need to speak the same language, as we demand common sense gun laws. We need to make it clear that we vote for our kids and the safety of our families and communities over politicians that want more guns manufactured. We need to tell our politicians on all levels that we will vote for those people who place their votes where we do.... **For safer communities, not more unrestricted access to guns.** This is our right and duty in our democratic country. We can and should engage with our local representatives, pick up the phone and make a meeting to hear what they are working on and what issues they care about, or to write a simple letter that clearly states: "Please support the work of CT Against Gun Violence and help to pass this important legislation, and if you don't vote for our interests, we will not vote for you, and we will actively support those who agree with us and oppose you." If we don't, then our voices will remain just simple conversation around our dining room tables and will not help to make the change that our country desperately needs.

We do not want to live in a country flooded with weapons developed for the mass killing of humans. The access to guns in our country is far too easy. No other society has the sheer quantity of guns that we do and the lazy approach to governing gun safety that we do. People everywhere struggle with mental health issues, but no other country comes close to our problems with gun violence. Despite what the NRA will claim, the evidence says that this is because of too many guns. We all have had ENOUGH. We all understand that we must make changes. We have lived long ENOUGH with extraordinarily easy gun laws. We need to find our way to amplify this sentiment of "**ENOUGH gun violence**". We need to find vehicles that will help us to drive home our demand for safer gun laws. We have had ENOUGH of paying the unfair cost of a gun flooded society through the high cost of prisons, healthcare costs from gun accidents, higher police protection costs and other social costs. We have had ENOUGH of the misinformation and scare tactics of groups supported by gun manufacturers and gun dealers. It is time to take a stand and demand that all military style assault weapons and high capacity

magazines are banned from ownership everywhere in this country; that there be background checks for every single gun sold in America; that gun owners pay an annual registration tax to offset the cost of guns in the U.S.; and that illegal gun trafficking be punished under federal law. This is a simple and very common sense beginning to healing the wounds caused by gun violence in our country. Please help us to take this important first step.

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