

Dear honorable members of the School Safety and Gun Violence Committee,

Our Founding Fathers would scarcely believe what is happening today here in Connecticut where the first constitution was drafted; a document that in fact established many of the fundamentals later used in the drafting of the United States Constitution.

I would urge this committee to recall why our ancestors insisted on the enactment of the Second Amendment as a condition for agreeing to call the federal government into existence with the Constitution: they well understood that the right to keep and bear arms provided the people with the ability to resist tyranny at the hands of their own government.

As the mother of a six-year old and an eight-year old, I was particularly horrified by the Sandy Hook massacre in Newtown; however, my outrage lies with the killer and his irresponsible mother, not the guns used to perpetrate such an evil act. There are many factors that very well could have prevented such an act from happening, but a complete ban on so-called "assault weapons" isn't one of them.

I steadfastly oppose all of the following proposed legislation:

- A ban on virtually all semi-auto rifles classifying them as "assault weapons" with no clause to grandfather in those firearms purchased legally.
- Restricting magazine size to 10 rounds, 6 rounds, 5 rounds or even just 1 round.
- Criminalizing ownership of magazines that accept more than 10 rounds.
- Confiscating all magazines holding more than 10, 6, 5 or 1 rounds, pistols included.
- Statewide gun registration for all firearms.
- Re-registration every 2 years.
- Requiring permits for any rifle with a pistol grip.
- Requiring permits in order to purchase ammunition.
- Limits on how much ammunition an individual may purchase and possess.
- Registration and background checks on all ammo purchases.
- Banning of internet sales of ammo.
- Reclassifying any long gun with a telescoping stock or pistol grip to be labeled an "assault weapon."
- Mandatory gun storage laws, like the one the U.S. Supreme Court struck down in the Heller decision.
- To establish a sales tax on the sale of ammunition at a rate of 50 percent and require all ammunition to be purchased in person.
- Restrict firearm sales to one per month.
- Require permits and universal background checks on all sales and transfers of guns, including long guns.

Presently there is no federal definition of an "assault weapon" (actually a semi-automatic firearm, more accurately called a modern sporting rifle), and the meaning of the term is inconsistent even within the gun industry. I encourage the committee to review the following link from the National Shooting Sports Foundation for a clear, accurate description refuting the erroneous claims about modern sporting rifles (<http://www.nssf.org/factsheets/PDF/AssaultBG.pdf>). If it is unacceptable for law-abiding Americans who want to keep themselves and their families safe from threats by owning a semi-automatic rifle, then why is it acceptable for the Department of Homeland Security to acquire 7,000 "personal defense weapons" (oddly called "assault weapons" when owned by civilians)? The hypocrisy is mind-boggling.

It is offensive and disgraceful that the actions of mentally ill, wildly insane individuals are so often blamed on the Second Amendment and/or the National Rifle Association. Knee-jerk, emotional reactions will not have the slightest impact on making our children, our homes, or our communities safer. It is counterproductive and unscrupulous to penalize law-abiding citizens and gun manufacturers after a lunatic goes on a killing spree. It is impossible to legislate morality or sanity, and the proposed measures as they now stand only serve to punish lawful gun owners in Connecticut; they most certainly will not stop the actions of violent criminals and madmen.

As a proud, unapologetic, law-abiding gun owner, NRA Benefactor Member, National Shooting Sports Foundation member, and Cos Cob Revolver & Rifle Club member, I respectfully request that you refrain from infringing any further on my God-given right to choose which firearms I may own and defend myself with.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully yours,

Susan Shea-Gerson
Greenwich, CT