

To begin with, let me thank you for your time and service to the State and People of Connecticut.

I am writing to urge you take action to reduce gun violence, in a meaningful way. By that I mean pass legislation that will actually reduce violence, not legislation that makes a statement or makes us feel better. The current proposals will not limit violence.

To begin with, I am the Father of two small children, a State Certified Child Welfare Law Specialist, and a gun owner. I purchased a gun because the town I live in does not have local police coverage from 11pm to 7am. We have a State Trooper who covers 3 separate towns, and who could be as much as 30 minutes away in the event of an emergency. I have taken handgun courses, safety courses, first aid courses and others. When not on my person, my handguns are kept locked in a safe. My children have been taught that there are three rules for guns. 1. Every gun is loaded. 2. Every gun is loaded. 3. Do not touch a gun without an adult present. Last year, after undergoing an exhaustive background check, psychological and personality exams and a 2 hour interview with 8 police officers, I was offered a job as a police officer, which I unfortunately had to decline. I say this all to let you know that I am a responsible gun owner. Please do not take action which would affect my ability to protect myself and my family. The Constitution of this State states that I may bear arms in defense not only of the state, but of myself. The legislation that you are considering would decrease my ability to do that.

Taxing ammunition at 50 % will not reduce violence, it will simply force residents to purchase ammunition in States that do not charge that much. A 50% tax on ammunition will not reduce the number of shootings, it would simply penalize responsible gun owners. It would not affect those criminals who do the majority of shootings, as they buy a pistol, keep it in their car, house, pants, etc., and don't shoot it. They purchase a small box of ammunition for \$15, and that's it. Would raising the cost to \$22.50 deter them? The common sense answer is no. However, for someone like me, who goes to a licensed gun range and shoots 200 rounds a week, at a cost of \$100, raising that cost to \$150 would impact me in a negative way. Prohibiting internet sales is ineffective as well. The people purchase over the internet are people who, like me, shoot frequently. I buy in bulk over the internet for cost savings. The people who commit the majority of shootings are not bulk buyers.

Reducing magazine size to 10 rounds (I will not discuss the reduction to single shot firearms, as I believe you all understand the unconstitutionality of that) will not reduce violence either. Has anyone bothered to examine the number of shootings in Connecticut in which the victim was shot with more than 10 rounds? Aside from the recent tragedy in Newtown, the number is minute. I am in no way minimizing that shooting, but we don't make laws based on the exception. When a dumptruck barreled into an intersection in Avon, no call was raised for limiting the size of dumptrucks. Instead, the call came for more enforcement of the existing regulations regarding inspections, maintenance and licensing. The same applies here, there should be more enforcement of the existing laws. Additionally, the majority of pistols produced today have magazines in excess of 10 rounds. That should not be considered high capacity, but regular capacity. The cost to this state would be astronomical, should this limitation pass. The State would need to grandfather in the existing magazines (leaving them in society, and therefore have no effect) or buy them back. To simply ban them is a taking under the US and State Constitutions. The cost to buy them back is conservatively estimated at over \$100,000,000.00. That is an awful lot of money to spend on something that would have little effect on safety.

Requiring insurance for gun owners is not going to reduce shootings either. Does anyone really believe that someone would not commit murder because it may be a claim against his insurance? And without knowing exactly who has firearms, how would this be enforced? There is no registration of firearms in Connecticut. Pistol owners file with the Department of public safety, but

they have a terrible history of losing paperwork and records. Owners of rifles and shotguns have no requirements. The same people who commit the majority of shootings are the same people who would not obtain insurance for the pistol under their mattress. Additionally, the US Supreme Court has interpreted the Federal Constitution as allowing citizens the right to bear arms. Requiring expensive insurance may put that right beyond the financial reach of normal voters. The less affluent voters among your district may not be able to afford the insurance you require.

Additionally, all of the above will require huge sums of money to implement, enforce and monitor. Money that could be put to much better use in ways that would actually reduce violence. Years ago we closed state institutions, with the promise of better community based treatment. That promise never materialized. Our spending on mental health treatment has plummeted annually since then. The money not spent on trying to enforce these feel good regulations could be used to step up enforcement of the existing regulations. Connecticut already has some of the most restrictive gun legislation in the Nation. We need to better enforce the regulations we have, before we enact new legislation that we won't enforce either.

There is legislation that many responsible gun owners support. Universal background checks, opening mental health history up to law enforcement for permit reviews, and others. But to simply enact legislation that penalizes the responsible and will have little effect on the irresponsible should not be the goal of this legislature.

I understand the desire to keep children safe. But no amount of regulation will prohibit someone who wants to commit a crime from doing so. We need to address the root issues that cause crime. Mental health, poverty, joblessness (and the resulting hopelessness). Until we do that, we will continue to suffer from these incidents. And if we really wanted to keep children safe, from a numbers standpoint, we would have a more effective child abuse prevention network, since more children are killed or severely injured at the hands of caretakers and parents every year than are killed by gun violence. More children die in accidental drownings than are killed by guns in Connecticut. Stricter pool regulations and lifeguard requirements would save more children annually than the legislation you are considering, and cost much less money. Please make this testimony part of the public record.

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