

70 Woodhill Road

Milford, CT 06461

Feb. 10, 2013

Dear Senators and Representatives:

I write this as a citizen and as a teacher, a person who is horrified by the continued death and mayhem caused by the easy access to guns in our country. Our country rightfully laments the 58,000 soldiers who died in Vietnam, the 3,000 civilians killed during the 9/ 11 attacks, yet within our own country 30,000 people per year die from bullets.

The time is now to take action to reduce the carnage. I say reduce because I know guns are a part of American culture, and do serve a purpose. The real debate needs to focus on what types of restrictions are necessary.

I believe that the Second Amendment needs to be amended, however difficult that may prove to do. In an era with a professional Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, National Guard, and Coast Guard, “a well regulated militia” is certainly no longer necessary. When the Bill of Rights was passed, the musket was the gun of choice. We have gone from a shot every 30 seconds to multiple shots every second. If people wish to use the Second Amendment as justification of unlimited gun ownership, then let them own as many muskets as they would like.

Whatever the legal requirements needed to pass a safety law, I would suggest the following restrictions:

- ⑩ No civilian needs to own a gun that can fire more than 10 shots without reloading, and even that seems too high. The guns that civilians own should have a reloading speed slower than inserting a new multi-round cartridge.
- ⑩ I don't see any reason why a civilian needs to own more than a shotgun and rifle for hunting, and perhaps a handgun for self-defense, and any of these for target shooting.

- ⑩ All gun buyers should be subject to a background check and a waiting period.
- ⑩ All guns should be registered. Cars have titles. So should guns. This would have a definite impact on the “straw purchasers” who buy guns for people who cannot.
- ⑩ People should be required to get a permit for handguns, justifying their need to own one. Handguns are involved with most crimes, and especially seem to be the weapon of choice with regard to armed robberies of stores, and killing of people in disputes, gang related or otherwise.
- ⑩ I think the idea of requiring gun owners to carry liability insurance is a great idea. This would provide victims and/ or their families with financial compensation related to the use of a gun. It would also place economic limits on how many guns someone might choose to purchase.
- ⑩ Gun owners should also be required to secure their guns in a locked cabinet, and be held responsible if those guns are not secured and used to commit a crime.
- ⑩ People who have been convicted of any violent crimes, have been convicted for cruelty to animals, or for domestic violence should be prohibited from owning a gun. Gun ownership should also be prohibited for anyone who has had a mental health evaluation suggesting they are a danger to themselves or others.
- ⑩ There should also be restrictions on ammunition. Civilians do not need to own anything other than an ordinary bullet. Exploding bullets, etc. should be outlawed. There should also be a limit on how much ammunition any one person can purchase at a time. If people need large amounts of ammunition for target shooting, then let them purchase the ammunition at the firing range for use at the range.

I realize that some will argue for greater access to guns so they can protect themselves from a possible outside invasion, from a future corrupt government, or from a future breakdown in society. All of these possible, but unlikely scenarios are easily outweighed by the daily war taking place in urban areas, and the mass shootings that are taking place too often in public places. The reign of terror in our country needs to end.

We can reasonably predict that without any gun restrictions, about 30,000 Americans will die with a bullet in them in 2013, 10 times more than died in the 9/ 11 attacks that triggered the “war on terror.” Well, Americans are doing far greater damage to themselves than any outside enemy.

The time for action is now.

I would be interested to see further studies on gun violence. In particular, those in favor of unrestricted guns might be swayed if they and we knew the true cost of gun violence on our medical system and social services network.

With regard to school protection, having armed guards in every school would be a colossal waste of money, money better spent on school psychologists and social workers who could help address students with mental health issues. I do think that every school should have a “panic button” that could summon police without a phone call. It would also make sense to alarm the glass at school entrances, so if that is shattered, the police are immediately contacted. Based on further exploration, it might make sense to have a Taser at each school. As far as classroom protection, a metal bat in each classroom could be used to disarm and disable an intruder trying to enter through the classroom door.

Sincerely,

Thomas Ebersold