

The loss of life in Newtown will never be forgotten. The anguish for the families and friends is a burden that will not soon be recovered from. But the fact remains that Adam Lanza did not legally purchase a firearm, he stole them. His mother failed to secure her firearms even though she knew her son was violent and it cost her her life and the lives of the children and teachers. The reaction to this horrendous tragedy has resulted in other citizens being punished for the actions of a mad man. Some legislators are motivated by emotion. Unfortunately, other legislators are using this tragedy as an opportunity to assault lawful innocent citizens and their Constitutional rights.

The plethora of proposed Firearms Bills are focused mainly on further restricting lawful gun owners rather than focusing on the specific issues that resulted in the Newtown tragedy. Rather than concentrate on meaningful solutions the focus seems to be centered on how to attack lawful gun owners as though they had a hand in this heinous act.

The latest FBI Unified Crime Report reflects 8,583 firearms murders with all types (only 323 by rifle) nationally. With over 85 million gun owners in the USA the math indicates that murders are committed by 0.01% of that figure, yet our legislators want to demonize the other 99.99% by further restricting rights or taking away or disallowing certain property. In Connecticut we have approximately 170,000 citizens with Carry Permits and probably a total of 250,000 gun owners (best guess). According to the latest FBI UCR there were 128 firearms murders committed in Connecticut by 0.051% of the gun owner population, leaving the other 99.949% to be punished by our legislators. The results of the math indicates that lawful gun owners are in fact not the problem, yet many legislators refuse to recognize this, no matter what the numbers indicate. Attempting to further punish or restrict the 99.9% of the law abiding gun owners makes no sense whatsoever.

On 9/11 a small band of Muslims murdered 3000 Americans. Did we punish all the Muslims in the US? No! That would have been a gross discrimination of a class of people who were innocent. When the Fort Bragg shooting took place, did we punish all the soldiers of the Muslim faith in the US Military? No, that also would have been inappropriate. Did we classify all Asian Americans as a threat after Seung-Hui Cho murdered 32 people and wounded 17 others on April 16, 2007, at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University? No, that too would have been discriminatory. Why then it is acceptable to segregate by class, lawful firearms owners from the rest of society, demonize us for exercising our Constitutional right to own firearms, categorize us as a group that threatens the safety of the rest of society, place punitive taxes and fees on us, threaten to actually register us and not call these actions "Discriminatory"? We have committed no crime, yet are not treated like other groups who did not participate in the aforementioned atrocities.

We hear comments like "there is no need for a high capacity magazines or Assault Rifles". Who decides what a citizen needs? Do we need cars and motorcycles that can go 180mph? Do we need alcoholic beverages? The latest annual statistics indicate over 30,000 deaths result from speeding vehicles and 10,000 from drunk driving (killing 211 children). Should we demonize citizens who own high powered vehicles and call them murderers? Should we register citizens

that purchase alcohol & beer? If I own a car and have a bottle of scotch in my home, should I be entered into a National Database? These absurdities do not apply to these individuals, yet are readily aimed by legislators at gun owners. This emotional bias has to be addressed.

These onerous gun bills are nothing but a blatant assault on lawful citizens who own firearms by legislators who are using the Newtown tragedy as an opportunity to further their anti-gun agenda. I think it is disgraceful to use peoples' emotions to pass bills that will neither protect our children and schools or increase public safety. We need to focus on the criminal element, mental health shortcomings in our State and consult security experts to secure our schools. What we don't need is to pass knee-jerk bills that are poorly written or crafted and have misplaced agendas.

Please feel free to contact me at any time.

Respectfully

Thomas Phelps
125 Phillips Rd.
Lisbon, CT 06351
860-376-5680