

Good afternoon. My name is Tom Maurath. My wife Daryl Zang and I were both raised in Newtown and along with our two sons and ten other immediate family members, we have called Newtown our home for nearly 40 years.

I am here today on behalf of Newtown. I am here on behalf of all communities in Connecticut. I am here on behalf of our entire country to say that the horrific tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School can never be allowed to happen again.

I want my testimony today to provide meaningful support toward the prevention of future acts of gun violence in our town, our state and our country.

The street corner memorials have been taken away and the national media has left our hometown. The expressions of sorrow, support, and hope for the victims and their families have been felt throughout the world.

While nothing can bring the 20 beautiful children and 6 heroic teachers back to their families, we are obligated as a responsible society to turn this tragic act of gun violence into a true catalyst of change.

This is a “tipping point” in our state’s history and it demands the following legislative changes:

1. It is time to ban all assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines.
2. It is time to require permits and universal background checks on new sales, resale and transfers of firearms.
3. It is time to make gun owners liable for negligent storage if any person gains access and commits a crime.

It is the responsibility of all Connecticut parents, citizens and elected officials to take action to make sure this never happens again. Unfortunately, without clear and decisive action, it is not a question of “if”, it is a question of “when” another gun massacre will occur in our country. If we do not take action to change our guns laws, then our complacency will be to blame when this happens again in another community.

School is not the only place our children go. We cannot expect to have armed guards at every sports field, ballet class, boy scout meeting or library story hour. We can, however, commit to taking sensible action to keep our children out of harm’s way.

I ask this legislative committee, along with the unconditional support of your constituents, to simply do the right thing. As our elected officials, you need to act now to pass the most comprehensive legislation in the nation. Connecticut needs to lead our country with committed actions to prevent gun violence in order to keep all our communities safe. Thank you.

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