

Testimony to the CT General Assembly Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

Uriel Scott, Norwich, CT

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Assault Weapons

The term "assault weapon" typically refers to a semi automatic firearm with certain cosmetic features, such as a pistol grip. For example, AR15 rifles are oftentimes referred to as "assault weapons." The fact is, such firearms are operationally identical to more traditional looking firearms (such as the Ruger Mini 14, or any semi automatic hunting rifle) and are not inherently more lethal or dangerous. People sometimes assume that so-called "assault weapons" are fully automatic, like the rifles used by the military. That is false - they are semi automatic - which means only one round is discharged when the trigger is pulled.

AR15s are one of the best-selling rifles in America, with over 3 million estimated to be in private ownership. A miniscule percentage of them have been used for criminal purposes. Otherwise, by an overwhelming margin, they are a firearm that is in common use for lawful purposes such as sporting (including competition shooting, varmint hunting and wild hog hunting), and self defense.

Therefore, I oppose broadening the CT Assault Weapons Ban.

High Capacity Magazines

The term "high capacity magazine," when applied to magazines with capacity of greater than 10 rounds, is really a misnomer. Many modern pistols and rifles are designed with *standard capacity* magazines of greater than 10 rounds in mind, and they are certainly in common use. Thus, I will henceforth refer to them as "standard capacity magazines."

What legitimate purpose do standard capacity magazines have? I would ask law enforcement officers, who routinely carry standard capacity magazines for both their duty pistols as well as their rifles. LEOs carry firearms for the lawful purpose of self defense and the defense of others. If they did not believe standard capacity magazines were suitable for this purpose, why would they use them?

Also, note there is arguably an asymmetry in how a standard capacity magazine ban would affect lawful users of firearms versus those who use them with criminal intent. Someone with malicious offensive intent can either (a) ignore the ban on standard capacity magazines, or (b) simply carry a large number of restricted capacity magazines. On the other hand, a lawful user generally does not have either of these options. He, or she, will not ignore the law, and neither will he generally have a large number of restricted capacity magazines accessible. Thus, a standard capacity magazine ban would likely disproportionately infringe on the lawful use of firearms for self defense relative to the extent it would impede the unlawful use of firearms. Since various studies estimate defensive gun usages occur with a frequency of hundreds of thousands to over a million times per year in the US, this would be a huge infringement on the lawful use of firearms for self defense.

Therefore, I oppose magazine capacity restrictions.

Registration

I am aware of no compelling evidence to believe that registration will do anything to enhance public safety. On the other hand a registry would require a substantial amount of resources to maintain. There is the potential for abuse of any firearms or ammunition registry. Requiring registration along with periodic re-registration is an undue burden on the exercise of a constitutionally protected right. Aside from that, frankly speaking, what firearms and ammunition I own is simply not the state's business. I therefore oppose registration.

Ammunition Limits

People buy ammunition in bulk for the same reason they buy anything in bulk: lower cost per unit. To a non-shooter, several hundred or a thousand rounds of ammunition sounds like a lot, but in reality it is not. Several hundred to 1,000 rounds of ammo only lasts a few range sessions or perhaps one course at a private firearms training school (of which there are at least two in Connecticut). Some people shoot as much as 25,000 or 50,000 rounds per year or more, in which case 1,000 rounds is only one or two week's worth of ammo.

Regarding the amount of ammunition possessed, maintaining a sizeable personal inventory of ammunition is rational for several reasons: (a) it is a hedge against future increases in the price of ammunition (the price of which has increased substantially in the past few years), (b) it is a hedge against future shortages of ammunition (we are in the midst of a shortage right now), and (c) it simply makes sense if you are a high-volume shooter. Again observe that one course at a local firearms training school may require anywhere from several hundred to 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Therefore, there are various legitimate reasons to purchase ammunition in bulk as well as maintain a sizable personal inventory. Limitations on the quantity that could be

purchased or possessed would impede on those, while not necessarily doing anything to enhance public safety. The amount of ammunition used in any instance of criminal use of firearms is generally relatively small.

Thus I oppose limits on the amount of ammunition that can be purchased or possessed.

Internet Sales of Ammunition

Internet sales of ammunition increases the pool of suppliers, which therefore increases competitiveness, and therefore provides the best price to consumers, who by an overwhelming margin use ammunition in a lawful manner. Banning online sales of ammunition therefore is anti-competitive, and only significantly impedes lawful consumers. Someone who intends to use firearms and ammunition for malicious purposes is not going to be stopped by the fact that he needs to purchase ammunition locally at an increased price. Therefore I oppose a ban on internet ammunition sales.

Laws on Gun Storage

Aside from the inherent difficulty of enforcing such laws, unless carefully written such laws would infringe on our constitutional right to bear arms for lawful purposes. Any storage law that would impede on the use of firearms for self defense would be unconstitutional, as was evidenced by the Supreme Court striking down the Washington DC law mandating firearms in the home be kept unloaded or bound by a trigger lock. I oppose any storage law that would require all firearms to be inoperable or locked up while the owner or a responsible trusted person is at home.