

January 28, 2013

Dear Esteemed Members of the CT Public Safety Commission:

I am Victor Benson, gun owner and owner of The Freedom Shoppe in New Milford, CT. I am here to give my testimony regarding efforts by state and federal legislators who seek to infringe on my second amendment rights in light of the tragic events in Sandy Hook on December 14th last.

I was shocked at the tragedies inflicted on innocent children as were people all over the world and our hearts go out to the families who lost their precious children to a deranged and disturbed person with death and destruction following in his wake.

I deal with gun owners every day as the owner of a gun shop. We were all deeply troubled by this tragedy. I am proud of the people who own guns and own them responsibly and feel that it is unfair to law abiding gun owners to be faced with bans and confiscation of their legally owned firearms.

It is asked many times in the media: "Why do you need an assault weapon and a high capacity magazine?" "Is it necessary for hunting or home defense?" To this I say, it is necessary because it is our right to own military style weapons under the Second Amendment of the United States as well as the Constitution of the State of Connecticut which was adopted on 12/30/65 (Article 1, Section 15) which states that "We declare that Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state." Nowhere does it say in either the CT or the US Bill of Rights that a citizen is entitled to a firearm suitable for hunting. Hunting has absolutely nothing to do with an individual's right to own a firearm. It has everything to do with the duty of every citizen to own a military style firearm to defend himself and the state and his own country.

Back in 1776, the sting of tyranny was much fresher on the minds of patriots who knew, full well, the feeling of living life under the thumb of a foreign King with no power to vote in the King's Parliament. At that time, America was used as a virtual teat to draw more taxes to add to the coffers of a tyrannical king three thousand miles away.

Our founding fathers realized this when they drafted the Declaration of Independence and included the Second Amendment in our Bill of Rights. Perhaps today, for most Americans, the sting of tyranny has waned.....Perhaps some of us has forgotten where we came from and what it means to be truly an American!

In our modern world, we need only to turn to the television to see national and world events. Most will remember the Los Angeles riots in South Central Los Angeles in the spring of 1992 where angry mobs of blacks were rioting in Koreatown against Korean merchants who saw their Asian neighbors as racists and proceeded to loot homes and businesses. The police were called for assistance but their calls were not answered. Many were looted and Korean business owners were robbed and beaten. The ones who survived and fended off attacks were those who stood their ground and wielded military style assault rifles and handguns. They were spared as nothing inside their businesses was worth dying for.

Then again, in New Orleans during hurricane Katrina in late August of 2005, as soon as the storm was over, looters began pillaging stores and businesses. The police had largely deserted their posts and utter mahem ensued. To make matters worse, Mayor Ray Nagin ordered his remaining police forces to confiscate all legally possessed firearms from law abiding gun owners whose sole purpose was to defend themselves from roving bands of criminals and looters. This was a travesty that should never be repeated.

It is my right and that of every citizen of this country and this state to, if he choses, to own a gun of his choice for the defense of himself, his family and neighbors, and the state. This includes military style semi-automatic rifles, pistols, and magazines holding more than ten rounds. This ensures us of the ability to adequately defend ourselves in cases of natural disasters, manmade disasters, and civil unrest.

The police say they need these weapons, but when the police are unable or unwilling to respond, what recourse will we have but to rely upon the only tools that are designed to fend off attacks in the wake of these events? It is said that "when seconds count, the police are only minutes away.."

Lastly, when the Federal Assault weapons ban was implemented, it was ordered that a study be done to ascertain the efficacy of the ban and whether it had a significant impact on crime. I quote: "In 2004, a research report submitted to the [United States Department of Justice](#) and the [National Institute of Justice](#) found that should the ban be renewed, its effects on gun violence would likely be small, and perhaps too small for reliable measurement, because rifles in general, including rifles referred to as "assault rifles" or

"assault weapons", are rarely used in gun crimes.^[10] That study by [Christopher S. Koper](#), Daniel J. Woods, and Jeffrey A. Roth of the Jerry Lee Center of Criminology, [University of Pennsylvania](#) found no statistically significant evidence that either the assault weapons ban or the ban on magazines holding more than 10 rounds had reduced gun murders.

The people who seek to usurp the rights of the people to own and possess small arms knows no limits. Quoting CA Senator Dianne Feinstein during her 2/5/95 interview on 60 Minutes: "If I could have gotten 51 votes in the Senate of the United States for an outright ban, picking up every one of them . . . Mr. and Mrs. America, turn 'em all in, I would have done it. I could not do that. The votes weren't here."

Clearly, the ultimate goal of Sen. Feinstein are the same as those cut from the same cloth such as our own State Sen. Martin Looney, Attorney general George Jepson, Gov. Dannel Malloy, and US Senator Richard Blumenthal. Governor Malloy was quoted as recently as January 24th as stating that public safety trumps the Second Amendment.

We should remember the words of Benjamin Franklin who stated in 1759 that "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Governor Malloy should be reminded that he took an oath to uphold the State Consitution.

Indeed we are the "Constitution State! Indeed we are Connecticut, gunmakers to the world with great names such as Smith and Wesson, Colt, Mossberg, and Ruger all having their beginnings in our state. This is our legacy and our duty is to refrain from "feel good" and "knee jerk" reactions to a tragedy in our state which will have no effect to solve the greater problem of how to keep our children safe. Criminals do not observe "gun free zones" nor do they care what type of weapon they will use to unleash their schemes of terror. What we need is the same security for our precious school children that we give bank deposits in armored cars and our president and VIP's. Give kids the armed protection they deserve in their schools and leave the law abiding gun owners of this state and country alone.

Thank you.

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