

CCDL, Inc.  
PO Box 642  
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www.ccdl.us

## Connecticut Citizens Defense League, Inc.

Co-chairs and Members of the Gun Violence Task Force:

My name is Virginia Benedetto, I live in Stratford, and I am a software developer. I am a gun owner and sport shooter, and I am a founding member and Technology Coordinator of the largest grassroots pro-2A organization in the state of Connecticut, the Connecticut Citizens Defense League. I thank you for scheduling a public hearing to listen to us on this important subject.

There are many buzzwords related to gun control, but unfortunately there is even more misinformation. Please, before any legislation is considered, educate yourself in the terminology. What is a semiautomatic? What is a high capacity magazine? What is an assault weapon?

For legal and responsible gun owners, these terms mean something completely different than for those that are not familiar with weapons, and only know what they see and hear most often.

**Semiautomatic:** "Ejecting a shell and loading the next round of ammunition automatically, but requiring a squeeze of the trigger for each shot." (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/semiautomatic>) Each shot requires a trigger pull. Unlike an "automatic" weapon, which are highly regulated by Federal regulations, there is no spray, or continuous fire, regardless of ammunition caliber, magazine capacity, additional features, or firearm type (handgun, rifle, or shotgun).

**Assault Weapon:** "In discussions about gun laws and gun politics in the United States, an assault weapon is most commonly defined as a semi-automatic firearm possessing certain features similar to those of military firearms." "The term "assault weapon" is sometimes conflated with the term "assault rifle". An assault rifle is a military rifle capable of selective fire." ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assault\\_weapon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assault_weapon)).

Most often, handguns, rifles, and shotguns are ONLY classified as an assault weapon due to cosmetic features of the gun, meaning they have NO affect on the functionality of the weapon. Adding a telescoping stock to a rifle does not make it fire faster, or make it automatic, it simply changes the way it looks, and can make a more customized fit for the user.

**High Capacity Magazine:** This is a hard term to define, as all weapons are different. There are many handguns that come standard from the manufacturer with more capacity than 10 rounds that seems to have become the magic number for distinguishing acceptable magazines from "high capacity" magazines. The difference in what is standard is usually determined by the stopping power of the caliber. In fact, many weapons that Police Officers use hold more than 10 rounds, up to 20 for standard issue handguns. There is no standard for all guns. Some guns even have a 'tube fed' magazine, which is not detachable. Some rifles can even hold 20 rounds in a tube magazine. A law cannot be imposed that would make criminals of hundreds of thousands of gun owners in our state, and **our state cannot afford to buy these magazines or guns from those that have legally purchased such devices in the event they were banned.** There is conflicting research on whether restricting the number of rounds in a magazine actually reduces the number of violent crimes committed with a weapon.

Every citizen has a right  
to bear arms in defense  
of himself and the state.

Connecticut State Constitution, Article First, Section 15



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Knowing these definitions, I would like to propose that our Law enforcement work to enforce those laws already on the books instead of passing new restrictions that affect those of us already following the laws. With Connecticut having the 5th strictest gun laws in the nation, we already have numerous laws to prevent gun violence, yet everyday just a few streets from my home, in the streets of Bridgeport, I hear about gun violence committed with what is probably illegally obtained weapons. There is never any mention or research that I know of about how a perpetrator obtained their weapon, so I cannot quote any statistics to verify my statement. What happens when the criminals come to my neighborhood, with their illegal weapons that may be better than my legal ones because I follow the law?

If legislation must be passed to help prevent gun violence, I will list a few bills that represent what I believe to be "common sense" gun violence prevention.

*HB-5165 AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFENSE OF A PERSON'S HOME, MOTOR VEHICLE OR BUSINESS:* This bill is intended to clarify an individual's right to "stand their ground" and defend themselves from an attacker, in their home, business, or automobile.

*HB-5269 AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTY FOR CRIMINAL USE OF A FIREARM OR ELECTRONIC DEFENSE WEAPON:* This bill increases the penalty from a Class D Felony to a Class C Felony for use of a firearm or Taser-type weapon during the commission of a crime.

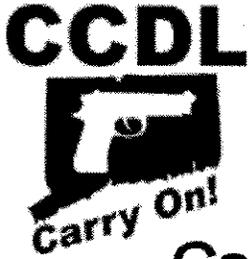
*HB-5952 AN ACT INCREASING THE PENALTY FOR THE UNLAWFUL POSSESSION OF A FIREARM:* This bill increases the penalty from a Class D Felony to a Class C Felony for illegally possessing a firearm.

*AN ACT ALLOWING SCHOOL BOARDS TO ESTABLISH PROTOCOLS PERMITTING SCHOOL PERSONNEL OR STAFF TO POSSESS WEAPONS ON SCHOOL GROUNDS (Bill number unassigned yet):* This bill clarifies that existing law permits school officials to establish protocols permitting school personnel or staff to possess weapons on school grounds.

Please feel free to contact me for any further information.

Respectfully submitted,  
Virginia Benedetto  
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1/28/2013

My name is Leonard Benedetto, I am a resident of Stratford.

I am also a Founding Member and the Vice President of Connecticut Citizens Defense League. The states largest Grassroots pro 2A organization. With membership of over 3500 and counting.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group thank you for having this hearing today. I appreciate you giving us an opportunity to speak with you on this very important subject.

The insane act of one teenager has turned our state and country up side down. There have been over 100 gun related bills submitted by yourselves and the rest of the legislature. Having read them, I know that some of you have already made up your minds about what you wish to impose upon us legal gun owners. So I suspect that plenty of the testimony today will "fall on deaf ears".

Due to this large number of bills, I feel to discuss many of them is not possible in my allotted time.

I would like to mention the bill that is looking to tax ammunition at a 50% rate. Ammunition is already taxed TWICE. We pay the state sales tax, as well as a federally mandated 11% tax due to the Pittman-Robertson Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937.

I am a state champion Trap shooter. My wife is a champion Trap shooter as well. We shoot Thousands of shells a week to maintain our proficiency and compete at this sport.

In Connecticut the season runs from April till October but we practice all year long.

At a cost of \$6 to \$9 a box of ammunition now. A 50% increase in cost would make the sport, that we love and practice, as much as possible, a thing of the past for us. Financially we could not afford the cost. Considering that we are champions and winners in this sport, we would also be losing prize money by not competing.

I would also like to mention briefly, any bill or bills that limits the capacity of a magazine to 10 rounds or less.

Many of my handguns were manufactured with a standard capacity magazine that hold MORE THAN 10 rounds. These are NOT high capacity, they are STANDARD CAPACITY and what the gun was designed to hold.

In conclusion:

I have been actively involved in the legislative process for only four years now.

Though I have testified enough to know that normally we get to testify on exact bills. I certainly hope that when this "NEW TO ALL OF US" process is completed and the Task Force on Gun Violence has made all its recommendations, that we will have a chance to testify again on the individual bills.

To discuss every bill that has been proposed in this short amount of time is impossible.

If we do not get this chance, then I feel that our rights to be heard will have been infringed.

Thank you,

Leonard Benedetto  
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