

Dear Members of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group,  
The horrible tragedy at Sandy Hook brings it all home. The time has come to fix our country's woefully inadequate gun regulations. To prevent gun violence, I ask the committee to recommend strengthening gun control. Connecticut must work to strengthen its already strong gun laws but as long as there are no federal regulations to ensure consistency across all the United States, the gun laws of this state can easily be undermined. Please recommend that the CT Government, as a unified entity, work to strengthen federal gun laws, also.

I agree with the views of Governor Malloy concerning gun control. And I support the proposals of Vice President Joe Biden and President Obama. They are common sense regulations that do not infringe on the rights of law-abiding citizens. And they do not infringe upon the second amendment right for a "well-regulated" militia.

I strongly believe we need to restrict access to guns. At the very least, there should be an immediate ban on dangerous semi-automatic weapons and military-style assault weapons, and a ban on ammunitions clips with more than 10 bullets. We need to strengthen and enforce background-check policies. And we need more education about gun safety and violence.

To consider the presence of a security guard with an assault weapon the only solution to prevent a tragedy like what happened at Sandy Hook is naïve. And to expect teachers to be armed is ludicrous. It takes many years of training to be able to use a gun effectively when faced with a bad guy with a gun. And who can guarantee the guns that are meant to protect will be properly used. A murder victim at Middlesex Community College, where I teach, was a woman who was raped and shot by a security guard.

The private security companies are not required by law to have the same rigorous mental health screening and training in gun use as required of the State Police. If we are to trust private security guards, town police, and even teachers with weapons around our children, the mental health screening and gun training regulations for these groups will have to be strengthened to match those of the State Police.

I am not against having armed well-trained State Police resource officers at the schools as long as their main purpose is to counsel as well as protect the students. There was an officer at my daughters' high school after the tragedy at Columbine. He was respected and well regarded by the teachers and student body. His job was also to educate about and prevent the other dangers our children face: such as substance abuse, suicide, and bullying. He was armed but he did not have an assault weapon. He did not sit at a front desk and wait for an intruder, and he was not there full time. Ironically his position was cut to save money. I don't know if he has been reinstated. In any case, would even he be able to defend against a determined attack by a person with a semi-automatic military-style assault weapon? Not likely.

Sincerely,

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