

Public Testimony submitted by Whitney Ball, resident of Darien for the January 28th, 2013 Public Informational Hearing, Gun Violence Prevention Working Group

Whitney Ball
January 27th, 2013

My name is Whitney Ball. I am a life-long citizen of the United States with deep, long-held roots in this country. I say this for those of you for whom this may matter. For me, what matters most is my identity as a mother; a mother to a preschooler and a first-grader; a mother who has been forced to feel heavy-hearted and at times even reckless when I drop my children off each day at school and I worry that they might not come back.

My call to action was galvanized by the unacceptable losses in Sandy Hook, but not born of them. Like many of us, I have lived for year with a growing sense of fear from the threat of gun violence, a reality that many children in our cities navigate daily. For far too long - in a country that each of us holds dearly - we have been forced to accept too great an infringement on our rights to life and liberty in exchange for the right to a certain liberty for some, but not all, Americans.

I have lived abroad, in countries where gun ownership is illegal and I have worked in a situation of civil war, where guns had fallen into all kinds of unimaginable hands. But it is here at home that I feel most unsafe, in a place where violence has become so commonplace and so randomized, where we are held hostage on a daily basis by a culture of generalized violence, where fear has become a currency. I never imagined a time when I would feel compelled to ask a parent before I send my child over to play at their house whether they own weapons; are they locked and is the ammunition separate?

Sometimes a study is simply unnecessary to determine that a situation is wrong and unacceptable. And no muscular interpretation of the second amendment should trump my child's rights to life and liberty or his right to move freely and to assemble peaceably. And certainly, most certainly above all else, no constitutional safeguarding should ever overshadow my child's right not to be killed. Yet, this choice has become the truth that must be spoken. We have been deprived of the right to thoughtful dialogue and free expression and our leaders have often not led with courage.

I urge this Committee to be brave. I urge you to seize this groundswell and work to ban high-capacity rounds and detachable magazines, to ensure universal and robust registration, to close the gun show loophole and to ensure that there is no grandfather close permitted to weaken any advances and to truly create a safer Connecticut.

Thank you.