

*The following is proposed testimony from William Begg, MD  
for the Bipartisan Task Force on Gun Violence prevention and Children's Safety  
on Wednesday, January 30, 2013*

In Dunblane, Scotland in 1996, a gunman walked into an elementary school and shot 29 first graders and four teachers, then shot and killed himself. 16 children and one teacher died. Andy Murray (Reining US Open and Olympic tennis champion) survived the massacre.

In Hungerford, Great Britain in 1987, a 27yo gunman armed with two semi-automatic rifles and a handgun, shot 31 people killing sixteen of them, including his mother, and then fatally shot himself.

In Great Britain, The Firearms Act of 1988 was passed in the wake of the first massacre, which banned the ownership of semi-automatic rifles and restricted the use of shotguns with a capacity of more than three cartridges. The Gun Control Network was founded in the aftermath of the Dunblane shootings, and tighter controls on firearm loopholes were enacted.

#### Gun deaths comparison US vs Great Britain:

- Mass murders since 1996:
  - Great Britain: 1 (2010)
  - USA: over 20 (22)
  - Data showed the tighter gun controls initially appeared to have little impact in Great Britain, as the number of crimes involving guns in England and Wales actually rose during the late 1990s, but since then the offenses and handgun-related crimes have fallen precipitously
- Deaths per million
  - Great Britain: 2.5 (2.5% the gun deaths of the US)
  - USA: 103 deaths per million (>40x the # of gun deaths c/w Great Britain)
- Total gun deaths:
  - Great Britain: 155 (0.5% of the gun deaths of the US)
  - USA: 32,163 (200x the # of gun deaths c/w Great Britain)

#### Gun Policy and Research:

- Association between handgun purchase and mortality from firearm injury. [Inj Prev.](#) 2003 Mar;9(1):48-52.
  - If you own a gun c/w those that don't own a gun.

- 4 times as likely to be killed with a gun
- 23 more likely to commit suicide with a gun
- 28 more likely to die of an unintentional gun death
  - 592 people died while cleaning their guns last year.
- States with stricter gun control laws have fewer deaths from gun-related violence.
- Of the 11 deadliest shootings in the US, five have happened from 2007 onward.
- 15 of the 25 worst mass shootings in the last 50 years took place in the United States.

Impression: **Gun control measures do have an impact and must be undertaken.** They may take a while to have their full effect.

Recommendations: (Excerpt from the Connecticut State Medical Society)

- Guns:
  - Strong assault-weapons ban
  - Elimination of the sale of automatic and semiautomatic weapons
  - Restrictions on the size of magazines and number of rounds held (< 10).
  - Extend background checks
  - Gun Research
- Mental Health Services:
  - Oppose cuts to mental health services.
  - Encourage medical staff to educate patients about the safety risks of having weapons in the home.
  - Support programs that educate the public about gun safety.
  - Providing accessible, affordable options for families of children with disabilities so they can get the care they need rather than waiting for them to break the law and be funneled into the juvenile justice system.
  - Educate families on limiting exposure to violent games and movies.

*Please note that this testimony represents the views of Dr. Begg, and not necessarily the views of Danbury Hospital nor WCHN.*

**William V Begg III, MD, FACEP**

*Newtown, Connecticut Resident*

*Emergency Department Physician & Clinical Practices Coordinator, Danbury Hospital*

*EMS Medical Director, Danbury Hospital*

*President, Danbury Hospital Medical Staff*



Danbury Hospital, 24 Hospital Avenue, Danbury, CT 06810  
C: (203) 449-3066 | O: (203) 739-6592 | [William.Begg@wcthn.org](mailto:William.Begg@wcthn.org)  
<http://www.danburyhospital.org>