

To The Honorable Members of the Committee;

I am a resident of Tolland, on the Board of Directors of the club and a long time firearms owner. My introduction to firearms was shooting 22 rifles as a child. My first experience with a pistol was in the military with the 45acp Colt 1911. I fired the Colt, the M16 and the M60 machine gun while in the military, but spent most of my time repairing electronic equipment. When released from the military I applied for and received my state permit in March of 1985. At present, I own a number of firearms and am part of a group at the Rockville Fish and Game club that teaches the State Permit Class for those wishing to obtain the Connecticut Permit.

Connecticut has one of the lowest crime rates in the country. Two years ago when testifying before the Senate regarding the “High Capacity Magazine” hearing it was noted that Connecticut was 4th safest State in the country. We already have some of the most restrictive laws in the country and it would take much more draconian rules to reduce the rate of violent crime rate noticeably.

We do have some problems that need to be addressed. If you have heard about the theft of firearms from a Gun Store in East Windsor Connecticut, you know that the individual charged with the theft had been convicted of a previous theft of 12 firearms and had received a suspended sentence. http://articles.courant.com/2012-12-21/news/hc-east-windsor-gun-shop-1221-20121220_1_gun-shop-adam-lanza-bushmaster-rifle

On Saturday, a South Windsor man — who had received a suspended prison sentence and two years probation in May on charges of stealing a dozen rifles and shotguns from Riverview Sales — tried to steal a sniper rifle from the same store, police said.

Jordan Marsh, 26, pleaded guilty May 10 to a single count of stealing a firearm and received a suspended prison sentence and two years of probation.

This was a man with known emotional or mental problems, that had interacted with family members who were frightened of him, the criminal justice system and medical professionals who had treated injuries associated with an accident. How did this person end up alone, without treatment or monitoring?

We do not need to try and ban the legal ownership of anything else, we need to keep these firearms out the hands of criminals and those with demonstrated mental or psychological problems. One of the first items covered in the NRA Pistol Safety Class is:

AMERICANS ENJOY A RIGHT THAT CITIZENS OF MANY OTHER COUNTRIES DO NOT—THE RIGHT TO OWN FIREARMS. BUT WITH THIS RIGHT COME RESPONSIBILITIES. IT IS THE GUN OWNER’S RESPONSIBILITY TO STORE, OPERATE AND MAINTAIN HIS OR HER FIREARMS SAFELY. IT IS THE GUN OWNER’S RESPONSIBILITY TO

ENSURE THAT UNAUTHORIZED OR UNTRAINED INDIVIDUALS CANNOT GAIN ACCESS TO HIS OR HER FIREARMS. AND IT IS THE GUN OWNER'S RESPONSIBILITY TO LEARN AND OBEY ALL APPLICABLE LAWS THAT PERTAIN TO THE PURCHASE, POSSESSION AND USE OF A FIREARM IN HIS OR HER LOCALE. GUNS ARE NEITHER SAFE NOR UNSAFE BY THEMSELVES. WHEN GUN OWNERS LEARN AND PRACTICE RESPONSIBLE GUN OWNERSHIP, GUNS ARE SAFE.

The Newtown shooters mother paid with her life for the negligent storage of her firearms. I don't need to add there were also too many others who paid too much as well. Everything in my position is in a locked safe, there is nothing in my home that can be picked up and fired.

On new year's day in 1988, I was asleep in my home and two felons entered my home and stole a number of items. I slept through their first trip, but was awakened during their second. I chased them out of the house with a pistol. I do not believe that the state should prevent me from having such a tool at my disposal or that any restrictions be placed on what tool I chose to protect myself with. I have a permit, a clean record and an abundance of caution. One of the burglars in my home that early morning was freed from prison, within the last few previous months, after serving less than half of a 6 year term for the rape of a 14 year old girl. He was again sentenced for a term of 6 years for the breaking and entering of my home and I was notified about 30 months after his trial that he was again bring paroled. I don't think he served a total of 6 years for the total of his crimes. (two weapons charges, theft of two motor vehicles, Rape, failure to appear twice and the burglary of my home)

Today I have, as a result of the burglary, two dogs, motion sensor lights outside, a house alarm connected to a monitoring service and a loaded firearm secured in a safe in my bedroom. No new law should interfere with my right to protect myself and family from those who would do us harm.

In short, we can ban everything, but if we can't keep 40lb bails of marijuana out of the country, gangs and criminals will always get what they want. Can't we, as a state, do something about the enforcement of the laws that are on the books already, before we look to add more hurdles and headaches for the legal gun owners?

I can support any provision that would require safe storage of firearms, services to those with mental or psychological problems, enhancement or enforcement of existing laws or any restrictions placed on those who have committed crimes, but bans of specific firearms or magazines are pointless measures that have not and will not affect those with no respect for the lives and property of others.

In an interview, one of the teachers at Sandy Hook stated she was hiding in a bathroom with all of her students and told them, "we have to wait for the good guys". We should commit to every school, teacher and student in the state that they will never have to wait for the good guys again. Why was it that when the students from Sandy Hook arrived at their new building in Monroe, the facility was surrounded by armed police? The news media pointed out that it was likely the safest school in America and yet we now debate the need for armed security at any other school?

The individuals who commit such acts look for places that have a large number of unarmed and defenseless people. They use these foolish “gun free zones” and places where they know they will be the only one with a gun. In the case of the Newtown shooter, once he understood that an armed response was in the building he killed himself. Security at a school should be at least as good as what we afford the elected officials in the state.

Please, we must provide additional security at our schools. We cannot allow anyone, regardless of defect or motivation to know that any building full of defenseless children.

Thank you for your time and your service to our State.

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