

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you today because I believe I have pertinent experience in all categories of this discussion. I have been a police officer in the State of Connecticut for more than nine years. This issue we face is extremely complex. The worst thing we can do is act hastily and because of emotion.

I will first address the issue of mental health. Connecticut law C.G.S. 17a-503 (summarized) allows police officers to commit individuals who may be a harm to themselves or others to a medical facility. This statute is used VERY commonly and unfortunately is thought of as being completely ineffective. Usually those individuals committed for evaluation are released before the police officer has even completed the paperwork. Usually only a brief interview with a doctor is all that is done. There is NO requirement that the individual receive any follow up treatment. Firearms seized from these persons are often returned. There is no way to find out if a person has been committed in the past when they apply to purchase a firearm. These points are just scratching the surface of this issue.

School Safety: School's are not safe. Period. Glass front doors, numerous points of entry, highly populated. Children are simply trapped in schools. There needs to be a police officer in every school. I often notice during nice weather many school doors are propped open allowing anyone to walk right in. All of these schools have policies that doors must be locked, but it is rarely followed. These are "targets" for evil people and they need to be hardened.

On gun violence. I have seen repeatedly throughout my career that criminals do not obey laws. They simply do not. We have a law in the state of Connecticut to cover every type of crime, especially those involving firearms. I have personally come in contact with several persons whose criminal history includes convictions for Murder. If we do not keep murderers in prison, who do we? The answer is not more laws. The laws are already in place. Let's get serious about them.

In closing, I hope this information speaks to you, from someone with their boots on the ground dealing first hand with these issues. Based on what I see in the media the focus is on banning guns. In my opinion, this will make no difference. I ask you to please take an honest look at the issues and take meaningful action, not emotional action.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brian C. Owens.