

Governor Malloy:

I am writing today to provide my comments on certain aspects of the initiatives being discussed related to gun rights in the state of Connecticut. First let me start off by saying that I am the father of two grown boys and a grandfather to two beautiful granddaughters. My wife and I own our home here in Clinton. I am a CPA that enjoyed an almost 40 year career in the financial services industry and left a 23+ year career with an international bank in April 2012 and am currently unemployed for the first time since graduating from college. Also my wife and I both possess our state concealed carry permits, own several handguns and regularly enjoy target shooting together at a local gun range. We each carry a handgun as we go about our daily business and I keep a handgun in my nightstand while we sleep. When our guns are not within arms reach, they are locked away in a 215 pound safe in the basement of our home.

Unfortunately, we are both very troubled by the current discussions on gun rights by our elected state and federal politicians. Our overall feeling is that law abiding citizens are being unfairly persecuted in the media and by politicians for owning guns. We also feel strongly that many of the proposals on gun rights such as limitations on assault style rifles, background checks, the number of rounds a gun magazine can hold, limitations on the number of guns that can be purchased within a certain time frame, insurance requirements, etc., while they all may sound great in light of the Newtown tragedy, do absolutely nothing what so ever to address what brought Adam Lanza to the breaking point where he felt his only option was to inflict unspeakable pain on so many individuals. All of the proposals put forth address Adam's means of destruction and do nothing to help identify, diagnose, treat or prevent others from getting to the same point as Adam. The proposals do nothing to address the mental health system and identifying and caring for such a sick individual or to address his parent's, mental health officials and his community's inability or unwillingness to get him the help he needed or the help that other Adams in our society may currently need. The proposals also do not address his parent's and law enforcement's overwhelming negligence for not keeping firearms out of Adam's reach.

Having said that, there are two aspects of the current proposals that are very troubling to us – requirements for gun owners to carry additional insurance and limits on the number of rounds a gun's magazine can hold.

The cost of gun ownership to has already been significant given the cost of guns, licensing fees, ammo, range membership fees (at \$35 for a half hour), storage, holsters, safety equipment, clothing, targets, etc. We have taken our obligation as responsible gun owners very seriously and have made a considerable effort in becoming proficient in the use of our firearms and ensuring their safe storage. I can honestly say that if we were required to maintain some form of liability insurance, we would definitely have to forfeit our guns because the cost of such insurance would be prohibitive for us. The result would be that we would no longer be able to legally protect ourselves in a manner in which we have chosen. We feel very strongly that our family would be put in harms way because our second amendment rights would essentially be held hostage by an insurance requirement that we can not afford. It is estimated that firearms are used 2 to 2.5 million times annually for self defense so please, I implore you; don't put our family in jeopardy and hold our gun rights hostage. Don't make gun ownership for us cost prohibitive, don't take away a sport and hobby that my wife and I enjoy together – don't require us to maintain liability insurance.

Regarding magazine capacity, while I can understand round restrictions for high power rifles such as an AR15, we don't agree with limiting magazine capacity for handguns which are our preferred means of home defense. Simply put, how many rounds are adequate when you are threatened by someone that breaks into your home in the middle of the night or attacks you in the supermarket parking lot? If the family in Cheshire had a handgun, could you have predicted how many rounds their gun would have needed in order to adequately protect the Petit family and possibly prevent what happened? There is no right answer! No magic number of bullets! But I do feel that limits on handgun magazine capacity would limit my ability to protect my family. We own one handgun with a 13 round capacity and another with a 17 round capacity. The 13 round gun is the one that we are most accurate with, it is the one that we have owned the longest, the one I carry 9 out of 10 times and it is the one I sleep with in my nightstand at night. The 17 round gun is our favorite for use at the range because we don't have to waste expensive

range time reloading. A restriction on both these magazine's capacity would render them illegal yet criminals will not adhere to magazine restrictions, just us law abiding citizens. We are no experts in home defense or have any training similar to the police or military therefore the larger capacity magazines provide us with the added protection that we feel we would need during a very stressful situation. At the very least, the magazines currently in our possession should be grandfathered which would allow the guns we currently own to be used as designed.

I would rather see stricter penalties on the illegal transfer of guns (enforcement or strengthening the straw laws). If someone knowingly transfers firearms illegally and an illegally transferred firearm is used during the commission of a crime, then the person who transferred the firearm should be treated as an accomplice and charged with the same crime. Similar to driving the getaway car during the commission of a robbery; if you knowingly sell or give a gun to someone that is not legally allowed to own that gun, and they kill someone, and subsequently charged with murder, then you should also be charged with murder. It should be that simple!

We understand that politicians need to "do something" in the wake of Sandy Hook, but we also feel that it is too easy to take ineffective action because it is easy to accomplish due to public sentiment and it gets politicians additional points in public opinion polls. It takes real courage to do what is right. As previously stated, the real issue with the recent tragedy is that the shooter's parents, either could not, or would not get him the medical attention he so desperately needed. They also failed on their responsibility to put their guns well out of the reach of a sick individual. No mentally stable person would do what Adam Lanza did. The real issue to be addressed is mental health – identifying, diagnosing and treating potential future Adams. The next deranged individual's weapon could be a gun, but it could also be a car, machetes bought at Dick's Sporting Goods or a homemade gasoline bomb made with gasoline bought at the local Mobil station. Nothing will change if we can't identify and treat these sick individuals and all the laws you pass related to gun ownership will be for nothing.

Finally, as I listen to all the discussion about gun rights, I cant' help but think about all the resource being used on the gun rights issue when an estimated 440,000 people a year die in this country from cigarette smoking, yet the number of people that die from guns is less that one tenth that number. It would be great if the same amount of national attention would be focused on the number of people that die from cigarettes and the tens of thousands of others, including many children with health problems due to second and third hand smoke. This is yet another example where politicians spend time passing laws that will not be enforced or do little to address the real problems in our society because it is once again easy to accomplish due to public sentiment and it gets additional points in public opinion polls.

It takes real courage to do what is right.

Sincerely

James & Marie Bouderau
26 Ben Merrill Rd
Clinton, CT 06413
Phone/Fax 860-664-4283