

January 25, 2013

Gentlepersons of the Bipartisan Task Force On Gun Violence Prevention And Children's Safety:

Please take the time to focus on the mental health, under diagnosed health and learning disabilities, and anger management aspect of this tragic shooting.

I feel the mental health system of care and caring in Connecticut is woefully neglected. Take heart, I am sure we are not alone. In America, the stigmatism of mental illness and lack of coverage in medical plans for counseling make it very difficult for a person or their family to get care they might need. Have you put on your agenda to talk to both privately offered and school counselors and psychiatrists and psychologists? Do they feel they have adequate resources?

Is there standardized testing for basic issues for children in the schools? I can only wonder if this young man from Newtown's Learning Disability (LD) was ignored for too long, and had treatable or manageable issues. This could have lead him to feel disenfranchised. What kind of testing should be discussed, reviewed, and if suitable, offered to all students' families, even in private and charter schools.

Have the classes the schools hold on bullying effective? Do the students feel it has resolved any stress in the high schools? We need to know, and I strongly suggest that these programs now offered to the younger grades and start before the anger builds to this level of desperate and tragic result.

I also ask have we done enough with our resources to offer community wide programs that included families and friends. Do we truly feel our State has adequate medical care, with sufficient psychiatric care, enough emergency services for kids in crisis, therapists, mentors, psychologists, facilities and outpatient programs for our kids? Do we truly feel that we have given that information to every mother, father, caregiver, concerned neighbor and friend? Is 211 emergency services really supported to the level they need? Do you plan to have the Institute of Living, Hartford Hospital and St. Francis Hospital testify before you to give you a state of our State's level of care?

Look at the patterns of the shootings, and then focus upon young persons of that age and sex. We have a population of young persons who feel that you act out your anger, frustrations, fears, or delusions using weapons. They are the young people that needed our help 10 to 15 years ago. This young man from Newtown probalby had some kind of psychiatric break. Every year that this passes without resolution, not just talks and planning, is a recipe for disaster for another tragic situation.

Respectfully yours,

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