

Very effective and thoughtful presentation, hope it changed some minds...

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Thank you.

My Name is Paul Passarelli. Last November I ran for the office of US Senator on the Libertarian ticket. I am a lifelong resident of Connecticut, and I am an engineer by training and avocation.

1) The issues of Gun Violence, School Security, and Mental Health, have been brought together by the event in Newtown. First I would like to point out that many millions of times each and every day, gun violence DOES NOT OCCUR. People handle their lawfully owned guns, ammunition, magazines, etc, and refrain from committing any violent act whatsoever. It is clear that the event has caused a reactionary response, rather than a considered plan of investigation.

It is because the response is reactionary, that I am taking the time to point out that each day many acts of violence occur. These acts are invariably contrary to law, yet they occur regularly. It has been said many times that "Extraordinary events make for poor legislation." aka "Hard cases make bad law." I would ask the committee to consider this axiom. While it is true that a gun allows a person to act, with greater energy than an unarmed person, it is also true that when one bad person begins to act with the additional violence capable of an armed individual, the *safest* way to counter that violence is with *equal and opposite* force. This is a fundamental law of physics.

It must be recognized that gun violence is not a normal consequence of everyday life; neither are automobile accidents, yet we are mandated by law to carry auto insurance. Why would the law *prohibit* the people from protecting themselves from another unlikely, yet potentially devastating event? Subsequently, it should be noted that cars kill far more Connecticut residents than guns do over any reasonable period of measurement.

2) School Security is usually a topic that involves inner city high schools. It has expanded to include middle schools and schools in less urban communities as well. The Newtown event can only be describes as atypical by any criteria selected, until we invoke Mental Health; more on that shortly. It must be recognized that no particular child was the target, nor is it likely that most of the adults were specific targets either. Again, the mental status of the shooter was, something other than 'normal'. It would not be unreasonable to conclude that an elementary school represented nothing more than one of the softest targets the shooter could identify. He might have targeted a nursing home except for the presence of orderlies whose tasks include

lifting the infirm into and out of bed.

The selection of the elementary school may have been based on the shooter's desire to immortalize his actions; it would be tragic if his actions did just that because of an insufficiently considered reactionary law whose purpose was simply an effort to prevent a recurrence of an unforeseeable tragedy, that could only be made real by the actions of an insane person.

Consider that until recently, teachers and administrators, not only carried guns, but participated in gun sports with their students. We trust our children's minds to teachers; I believe we can trust their physical safety to them as well. It is my considered opinion that a teacher or administrator who also happens to be a responsible gun owner should be allowed to carry a firearm during the normal course of his/her day. It strikes me as bizarre that certain aspects of trust are granted and others denied. I have observed for many years that certain teachers can do significant long-term harm to their students with nothing more than chalk and the spoken word.

3) Mental Health is a subject I have only limited experience with, as is probably true of *most* Americans and Connecticut residents. I would go on to comment that many children of the public schools have had their "mental abilities" damaged by the "one-size-fits-all" curriculum that has come down from "on high"... But that too is subject matter for another time.

It can be said that the mental health of the shooter was abnormal. It is almost 'a priori' (a requirement), because, no mentally healthy person would have committed such an act. The question is: Could the mental health system have prevented the tragedy? The answer is: We do not know. What we can conclude is that the public mental health system, like the rest of the public health system is not performing up to par. It is my opinion that the problem with public health is that we have "too much" rather than not enough. Conditions that were unheard of in my childhood, ADD, ADHD, and the rest are routinely diagnosed and *treated*, at great expense. Often the doctors will diagnose a "condition" simply to satisfy the expectations of the parents and/or the school system. The rationale is that normal children should get by with normal instruction, expectations, effort, behavior, conditioning, etc... When a discrepancy exists, it is "important" to establish a reason...

Ask anyone who has access to a free clinic as part of their healthcare system. The lines at the clinic are almost not worth the wait for the "free" services, if you factor the value of your time. People will endure the hassle out of a sense of "entitlement". When the system was "fee for service" based, people were naturally resistant to quick diagnoses, and "easy fixes". Yet when the evidence was clear and overwhelming, then real treatment was sought and provided. The free market made certain that supply & demand kept pace.

If my testimony is now earning "eye-rolling" thoughts, because the reader/listener believes that I am a Libertarian zealot, I would like to remind everyone that the phenomena called "The Market" is as natural to people of every culture as raising children is. For generations, Americans had access to Guns, Schools, and suffered the occasional Mental instability. Yet it is only recently that these these issues have come together. It is the nature of legislators to try to use legislation to control the behavior of people. The statistics very reliably show that legislation aimed at aberrant behavior is far more likely to harm law abiding people than it is to curb

abnormal acts.

I hope the committee will step back and apply a dose of common sense before railroading through legislation that only has a marginal chance of stopping the next tragedy. The effects of an Anti-Gun Agenda is not what the State of Connecticut needs now, or in the future. Passing a bad law will not bring back the children who were murdered by a madman. Do not let their legacy be the death of another civil liberty on the altar of political expediency.

--Paul



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The Light is Green!

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