

Rabbi Prayer's Testimony:

Mr. and/or Mrs. Chairperson, committee and all those assembled here today, I thank you for this opportunity to present my testimony:

I am Rabbi Shaul Prayer of Congregation Adath Israel of Newtown Connecticut and I am a first responder.

I was present at the firehouse to comfort teachers and families and first grade parents whose precious children

were massacred in their classroom in under five minutes on December 14, 2012.

The introduction of automatic and semi-automatic guns onto the market is a fairly recent phenomenon, and date back to 1972. Rather than dictate my opinion to you the law makers, I wish to ask you a few simple question:

What does this special committee think about this experiment? Has the presence of these high powered human killing machines been a successful experiment? Have we seen these styled guns used in spree killing episodes that occur too frequently? If you feel that the amount of spree killings that these guns have been involved with is acceptable, than by all means, do absolutely nothing. If however, you have observed that the use of these guns have been used in spree mass shootings with increasing frequency; and if you find these shootings to be unacceptable, than by all means ban them!

Concerning regulation of all guns. There makes absolutely no sense for there to be any loophole in gun regulations whatsoever. The fact that about 40% of the guns in the hands of citizens were purchased through the loop hole is disturbing. Why was this ever considered to be acceptable? Would you secure a building by locking the front door but leaving the back door wide open? This is not a logical or effective security policy. What were you thinking? Please fix this immediately with universal background checks. Please increase gun education services to all gun owners. If you ask yourself why Canada which has the same violent culture as the USA, experiences a fraction of the amount of gun violence, I believe you will find the answer to be regulation, education and control. It is not rocket science and it is not a mystery.

One of the aspects all spree shooter mass murderers have in common is the fact that they were all bullied in school. As such there should be anti bullying laws put in place in all Connecticut schools. Moreover, these laws must be enforceable, they are not at the current moment. Schools that do not enforce the bullying laws must be sanctioned.

The only way to confront a culture of violence and incivility is by replacing it with a culture of peace and civility. At Westcon there is, The Center for compassionate living. There are learning tools and curriculum that impart and cultivate in students K-College, important life values, ethics, emotional intelligence and enlightened civics. These resources must be imparted in the public school system. Unless this type of social science is offered in cities throughout Connecticut, the only show in town will be the gangs. Offering a positive alternative to gang violence is the only way to systematically stem the flow of violence. More than 10,000 people

are murdered in cities throughout America annually by small hand guns. These guns are not on the table for banning and are here to stay. And as such, while the gun regulations and gun control proposals currently on the State and Federal tables, is a positive move, it will nonetheless, address a very small part of the problem of gun violence in America. The only way to significantly curb the violence and transform America into a culture of peace, compassion, civility and happiness, is via education and spiritual awakening. This panel can vote for the introduction of viable educational learning tools into the public school system that provide a powerful alternative to the culture of violence currently plaguing our school system. This is the aspect I am personally acting upon and would be available to work with congress on implementation. Please contact me at rabbirock@optonline.net 203.209.4662

Currently gun manufacturers are marketing guns to youth in the same marketing scheme as soda is marketed to youth and the same marketing scheme as cigarettes were once marketed to the youth. I find this to be reprehensible and so should you! Just as it was curtailed in the sale of cigarettes so should it be curtailed in the sale of guns.

Violent video games have been shown to instill within youth anti social behavior and may be a powerful factor in the phenomenon of spree mass murderers. The US Army uses violent video games to help enable new soldiers to overcome their natural fear of killing people. While the jury is still out concerning the proof of an actual causative relationship between violent video games and mass killings, one need not always be a meteorologist to discover that it is raining. As such, there should be certain protections put in place concerning the marketing of these games. These measures can include the publication and distribution of current research about violent video games so that parents can be educated and empowered.