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Mental Health Working Group
Legislative Office Building, Room 2C
Hartford, CT 06106

Honorable Members:

I strongly **oppose** any action that will limit or penalize the law-abiding gun owner in this state.

This past weekend, thousands of AR-15 sporting rifles and tens of thousands of semi-automatic pistols fired hundreds of thousands of rounds of ammunition at local gun ranges by law-abiding gun owners and not one person was injured.

I've reviewed the eighty-plus House and Senate bill proposals recently submitted designed to further control guns, ammunition and gun registrations. Of note; gun control proposals far outnumber the proposed legislation to improve school security, mental health and/or reduce gun violence. Of bill proposals submitted, I'd like to highlight the few proposals that, I feel, make sense:

- SB-169 concerning the assessment and delivery of mental health services and interventions for children. (wouldn't hurt to include adults in this proposal)
- SB-499 concerning the duty of a psychiatrist to warn law enforcement authorities of a dangerous individual....

Bill proposals that speak to ammunition clip limitations, assault weapons, taxes, etc., fail to address the root cause of the Newtown tragedy – mental illness.

Over the last 150 years, this country has been subjected to depraved acts of murder by a significant number of Caucasian males in their early 20's all of which have been documented with some form of psychosis. Among these acts included the assassinations of Presidents Lincoln and Kennedy. Running through a partial list of perpetrators - Booth, Oswald, Whitman, McVeigh, Komisarjevsky, Holmes and now Lanza, it would appear that there is a common denominator of these young males. Most would jump to the conclusion that guns are the common denominator, but that conclusion would be disproved due to the tens of thousands of males of similar age throughout the United States who are responsible guns owners. One would think if guns were attributed as the root cause, the frequency of Newtown massacres would be much greater. Fortunately, that is not the case.

I am not a psychologist, but once a rational root-cause analysis is made one can infer that these personality types are typically anti-social, very intelligent, enamored with

fame and are opportunists. Almost all have histories of extremism or mental illness. Being able to systematically identify these traits could possibly serve as a warning system, but the difficulty arises in not infringing on privacy rights of the individual. Increasing funding and awareness of mental health issues would be a good first step in intervention.

This committee should focus on effective recommendations:

- School systems should employ additional mental health counselors to an effective counselor to student ratio.
- "Gun-free" zones do not work. They create opportunity for criminals and the mentally ill. Eliminate the opportunity.
- Legislators need to review existing gun laws and increase penalties for gun-related violent crimes. Stop releasing violent criminals back on our streets through early-release programs only to violate us time and again.
- Stop the wasteful government spending and invest in mental health programs that screen our youth for potential problems.

If everyone takes a step back, in a rational analytical fashion, the answers should be evident of what we can do almost immediately in improving the safety of our public. Gun control, in addition to being unconstitutional, is a plan with a zero net gain that will subject law-abiding citizens to a higher criminal risk.

Connecticut's reputation as the "Constitution State" is at stake. The state that gave birth to our national document is now poised to destroy the very essence on what makes the United States the greatest republic – the only republic – this world has ever known. All this motivated by a "perceived" threat from law-abiding gun owners.

Take the national lead, put aside the partisan theologies, address the root cause and formulate an effective plan.

I thank you for the opportunity to submit my views to this committee and I'm confident that the right course of action will be implemented.