

CC: Governor Daniel Malloy, Senator Beth Bye, Gun Violence Prevention WG

Subject: Conduct of the Working Group and its members during Public Hearing, 29-January, 2013

Sen. Looney, Rep. Miner,

On the 28th of Jan I attended the public hearing of your working group (WG) in order to speak. I had never even been in the LOB, much less given testimony. It was a sea of people and people's positions on the subject were quickly identified by the stickers passed out and proudly worn by both sides. I was apprehensive about the clear "us and them" demographics. What I experienced was civility and respect. I saw people from both camps holding doors, offering seats, providing advice and chit chatting about the logistics of such a large event with those tagged as "the other side". An older man stood next to me in line of the opposing position, and yet we had a polite and friendly dialogue, agreeing that it was a difficult topic with many passionate supporters on both sides.

Taking a break from the proceedings I headed to the Café to grab a sandwich. Sitting alone at a table, a woman came up to me, and we each saw each other check our respective "badges". She politely asked me if she could ask me about my views, which I gladly shared. She listened and didn't judge. I asked her about hers and we shared some of the personal influences that had brought us to those positions. Both listened and I hope she felt heard, as I did.

What I experienced inside the hearing room was the antithesis of the respect I saw individuals offering each other in the halls and in the hearing rooms. I will refrain from referring to the Working Group as a whole, as there was a wide range of behaviors. Several members, some with views I strongly opposed, were attentive and appeared to listen to every single speaker regardless of position. They have my respect, whatever their views.

However, a number of the members behaved as if they had been trapped in an airport waiting for a delayed flight. They seemed to find so many other things to occupy their time, side conversations, reading, working on their computers or hand held devices. There were those that disappeared for hours at a time. One member actually slept through much of the testimony.

One participant however bears calling out by name. While not a member of the GVP Working Group, Senator Beth Bye, an author of proposed bills was in attendance. Her contempt for the proceedings couldn't have been more obvious. For hours on end, I never saw her look up from her computer. Sitting on the end, the shots of her computer screen showing her time spent on Facebook and Twitter is now well documented. Even more troubling were her mocking and derogatory comments on Twitter, captured and now widely available on the internet. I might dismiss such sources if I hadn't witnessed it myself first hand. On line she mocked speakers by proposing a drinking game based on every time she heard the phrase "law abiding citizen" Is that Senator Bye's idea of dialogue; of working together to find solutions? Her behavior was more in keeping with a spoiled 10 year old in time out than that of an elected official; an official that swore an oath to perform a job to SERVE the people.

There was already mistrust among the pro 2nd Amendment participants that this WG was unfairly balanced. All we had was our voice, our presence, our personal testimony. It is wholly unacceptable to have allowed behavior by some members of the WG that showed a glaring disrespect to speakers of both positions. These people took time away from their work, their families, and their lives to come out in a snow storm and sit for many hours for 3 minutes of being heard. The turnout was overwhelmingly in support of 2nd Amendment rights. Know that, by the behavior of some members of the WG and Senator Bye, you have undermined the credibility the entire working group with the people you claimed you wanted dialogue with.

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