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Mr. Speaker, I move we waive the reading of the List of Bills and the bills be referred to the Committees indicated.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Question is on the waiving of the reading of the bills and referrals as indicated. Is there objection? Is there objection? Seeing none, so ordered.

Representative Nafis.

REP. NAFIS (27th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Clerk is in possession of a List of Referrals that is today's Go List. I move that we waive the reading of the List and refer the bills to the Committees as indicated.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Motion is to waive the reading of the List and to refer the bills to the Committees as indicated. Is there objection? Is there objection? Seeing none, so ordered.

THE CLERK:

Mr. Speaker, Emergency Certification, Senate Bill Number 1160 AN ACT CONCERNING GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY, LCO Number 5428.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Mr. Clerk. With that, will you please call Emergency Certified Senate Bill Number 1160.

THE CLERK:

Bill Number 1160 AN ACT CONCERNING GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY, LCO 5428, introduced by Senator Williams and Representative Sharkey.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Aresimowicz.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Mr. Speaker, I move passage of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is on passage of the bill. Representative Aresimowicz, you have the floor.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Mr. Speaker, we are gathered here today to talk about Emergency Certified Bill Number 1160. It's a process that's been going on over the past few months, with a lot of input from many people. It's a thoughtful and timely response to the Sandy Hook tragedy.

I'm going to provide a brief overview of the bill and describe the process lightly how we're going to do this. It is a little break from the norm. We went with the bipartisan committee. We had subcommittee

chairs that came forward with recommendations and then the leaders met many hours to come up with the bill that's here before you.

The legislation before us will give the State of Connecticut the strongest gun laws in the nation. We will enhance and strengthen our mental health system, including improved identification for children and adults with mental health issues. There's measure included in this bill to address school security.

I think this process has been difficult on all of us, and as we move through the process, we took in a great deal of information, talked to many sources. But the main source that was always on our mind were the parents and the families that were involved in Sandy Hook.

For the gun violence aspect, we will have two Representatives addressing those. That will be Representative Dargan and Representative Fox.

For the mental health, it will be Representative Wood and Representative Megna.

For the school security sections, it will be Representative Fleischmann. They will give a brief summarization to their various aspects of the bill, and when we open the floor to questioning, the Chair

will indicate who the questions will be going to, based upon the subject matter.

Mr. Speaker, to start this all important process, I respectfully request that you recognize Representative Dargan for the purposes of beginning the summarization of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Dargan, you have the floor.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. A few weeks back, I had the opportunity to bring out another Emergency Certified Bill that dealt with our first responders on that horrific day of December 14th, and we, as a Chamber, came together in one voice to help not only our first responders, but our teachers and everyone else that was impacted.

And I realize today that this is a very complex issue, and last year, last week, I heard from one of the victim's father's who profoundly said, we as a nation and society need to come together. We as a nation and society have to come together.

If we could take back that horrific day of December 14th, I honestly don't know if we would be

here having this discussion here tonight, Mr. Speaker. But before I get into different sections of the bill, it's important to talk about the process, the process that was put forward by you, the leaders, our Majority Leader Representative A to Z as I call him, to our Minority Leader, Larry Cafero, to you, Mr. Speaker, to President Williams, to Majority Leader Williams and to Minority Leader McKinney, and Looney, and that process was put forth to have some subcommittees on mental health, on public safety, on gun issues, on school safety, and we met.

And our subcommittee met for over, and heard, for over sixteen and a half hours, discussions about gun issues. And I have to really thank my Ranking Member of the Public Safety Committee, Representative Giegler and the Chair of the subcommittee, Representative Miner for the way that they handled themselves, the way that they took input during that sixteen and a half hours.

And then we proceeded as a group to go to Newtown collectively, fifty plus members, and listen to residents to over midnight. And then the Governor put together a group and then we came together, surprisingly, surprisingly that subcommittee came up

with over 16 recommendations, Democrats and Republicans, that did not even share that information but when we met I was overwhelmed how much, how much we came together as a group.

And then we, the committee process, the committee that I Co-Chair, Public Safety that has cognizance over gun-related issues in the state, came together and voted out, which has never happened up here, universally on some gun issues. Democrats and Republicans, people to the left, people to the right, and I want to thank each and every one of you that served on those subcommittees that spent countless hours away from your family.

And over those past six weeks, you, the leaders, have met constantly, together, working together getting calls from Speaker Sharkey at 10:00 o'clock on some gun-related issue dealing with technology that the group was grappling with.

So we're here today. We're here with heavy hearts, with a number of philosophical beliefs. I've heard from a number of good people that are permit holders, are gun people, are good, decent, law-abiding citizens, and they've come to me and they came to a number of you and said, why us?

We pay our taxes. We like to hunt. We like to go to the club. Why us? And that is a difficult question that we come forth with tonight because a number of us, a number of us have different beliefs.

For the years I've been up here, I've been kind of a middle of the road type of guy with gun issues. In our committee, we defeated a lot of different gun issues that we didn't think made sense.

I've listened. I've listened to our inner-city, our black and Hispanic Legislators in this Chamber that say the violence in our country, the violence in our country with these multiple murders seem to be done middle-aged white guys. Our inner-cities, where the majority of murders happen, not too far from this building, we as a society do not come together to address that issue.

We are here tonight, collectively, to have that discussion, to try to make our cities a safer place for our state, a safer place, and there's a number of different beliefs in this Chamber that I have the most respect for and we will hear them as we progress.

So, I thank the Chamber for the opportunity to address you and I'd like to get into different sections of the bill.

Section 1 deals with no sale of a long gun dealing with an 18-year-old or under.

It deals with no sale to anyone 21 or younger on most rifles. We talk in Line 18 and on about after April 1, of the year 2014 to buy any long gun, you must carry a permit or 2) you must have a pistol sales permit or a pistol eligibility certificate or a long gun eligibility certificate.

As we move on, it really talks about what the current law is and how we rework background checks for retail sales.

It also deals with technical and conforming changes as we move along and then we get to Line 79 or so, we talk about the NIKS check by DESPP, which is our State Police, which allows for background checks to be made through the retailer directly to NIKS without going directly through DESPP.

And then we go over the next couple of pages and it just basically talks about being, confirming into statute.

And then we get to Line 144 or so, it still confirms still a two-week waiting period prior to April 1, 2014 unless you already have a permit eligibility.

Then on Line 164 it exempts sales by bailers and a manufacturer and importer, and then on Line 169 it allows AR in court discretions.

Then we go to Line 199 or so. It talks about a Class D felony unless it's stolen or altered. Then it would be involved with a Class B felony.

Section 2 talks about an 18-year-old must obtain a long gun certificate.

As we go to Section 3 it talks about the process to apply to be eligible for that certificate and it matches the process for pistol eligibility as we move forward.

And then in Section 4 we talk about the $35 fee for that eligibility certificate or the $35 for the renewable and it's good for five years, similar to what it is underneath current law.

And then we go to Line 316. It talks about the notice of expiration.

In Section 5 it talks about the eligibility certificate again, and as we go forward and through that section it's pretty much conforming language as we go through Sections 7 and 8.

And then like Line 383 it adds the mental health look back.

And then as we go along into Section 9 it talks, it's pretty much conforming language.

And then in Section 10 we talk about the voluntary admission and the facility to report to DMHAS.

And then as we progress it adds voluntary admission to existing information that DMHAS and DESPP must share. That goes through Line 498 and it continues on to the next page.

Section 12 really talks about any technical changes.

Section, as we move along in Section 13, it talks about firearm or ammo and Section 14 gives those definitions.

It gives the number of sale of ammo or mags to individuals under 18 years of age.

We go on to talk in Line 561 about the no sale of ammo or magazine after October 1, 2013 unless you have 1) you have a carry permit or 2) you have a sales permit or 3) you have that pistol certification or 4) the long gun registration or certificate, or, you know, another issue would be the ammo certification and photo ID.

It also talks about sales between a dealer and manual importers. It changes that to a Class B felony.

Section 15 goes to DESPP for, which is our State Police for the ammo certification.

Line 585 recognizes national background checks based on the name, date of birth, not the fingerprints. It also talks that DESPP issue ammo certification unless ineligible for a long gun eligibility certification based on that background check.

We go on to Line 604. It talks again about ammunition and the exemption from disclosure, disclosure about that ammunition.

Section 16 talks about the renewal fee of ammunition of $35.

Line 630 again, just talks about how long it's good for, five years. The ammunition certificate valued for 90 days after the expiration.

Also, 17 talks about the ammo certification and how it can be revoked. And then it really goes through what those definitions are. So that would be a number of sections 1 through 17.

Then what I'd like to do is go to Section 22, I mean, I'm sorry, 23, which deals with the issue of definition of magazines and what those definitions are and how it allows magazines if you know, if you come and deal with a back order on guns and how you deal with that issue. It also effectively talks about the sale, transfer, import of large capacity ban and what that penalty would be, which would be a Class D penalty.

It covers the adherence, the Internet sales through distributors. It talks about the offers of that sale within our statutes.

We go on to 999, so it talks about if ownership before passage passed with the declaration by January 1, 2014, what the infraction would be. It talks about what the penalty would be and it also talks about obtaining and possession after January 1, 2014 that Class D felony.

As we go on, it talks about the law enforcement exemption included for off duty for service weapons. It also talks about the exemption for our nuclear regulatory facilities in southeastern Connecticut because the issue on federal law that they need to

handle minimum of a 30 mag within their weapons, so we talk about that.

We talk about some other manual exceptions and other exemptions from that. We go on to talk about transfer to others to allow those to possess. We talk about permits with AR with the court discretion.

We require to declare those large capacity magazines by January 1, 2014. We go on in Line 1054 and on about DESPP, how they will prepare that declaration form.

In Line 1062 we talk about how we may declare when you apply for renewal permits and the certification of possession of that, if you have assault weapons at the time.

We talked about DESPP with adoption of the regulations, the declarations that they will put forth.

We move into Connecticut with, Connecticut issues, with the large capacity magazines and that language is like from 1086 and how you would have to get rid of that within 90 days.

We talk to, about the dealers and dealers execute the certification and reports that to DESPP in those sections.

We talk about in Line 1121 what a person's residence is and the declaration that he or she must possess and we talk about the transfer of those, the definition of large capacity magazines. If you already have them and you want to go to the gun range, what the law says now, you have a 30 mag, you have 50, whatever size you have, if you have it in your home and you want to go to the gun club, you could do that, but underneath this law, you can't have more than ten bullets within whatever size that magazine is.

So, you could have the magazine in your home. You could go to a gun range. You just can't transport more than 20 mags within that, and you could get to that gun range, and depending on the size of that magazine, you could use that at that facility at that time and then when you transport it back, you would have to be what the law is, which is ten magazine.

Section 32 deals with armor piercing bullets and now it applies to the 50 caliber bullet. It talks about the definition and how that definition is expanded. It goes on to Line 1642 knowing that somebody has bullets in the gun what that penalty would be, a Class D felony.

We go on and there's technical revisions to it.

Section, and that's pretty much what that Section does.

Now, I want to move on to safe storage, which is Section 54 through 56. It talks about how you must meet the safe storage regulations. It talks about a minor. It talks about a resident who is ineligible to possess a firearm or a resident who possesses a risk of imminent personal injury to oneself and others.

It talks about that extended liability. Section 56 really expands what the criminal neglect, the neglect part of that Section 56 is.

As I move on, I want to move on to Section 60 and 61. It deals with the Board of Firearms and Permit Examiners and basically that, the definition within that adds two new members of that board, one appointed through DMHAS, of somebody with a mental health expert and the other person would be a retired judge.

We thought, I think a number of people probably talked to leadership about that, that it was a good board and we should keep it and maybe to just add a couple of individuals.

Also, in Section 61 we talk about the continuance for good cause.

In Section 62 we talk that this Section came from our Majority Leader dealing with DESPP to study online registration permitting system because we realize that we've heard from a number of individuals on the backlog on actually registration and renewal or a new permit that there's been some issues.

The last issue that I would like to talk about is Section 63. It's an issue that's been around for years. It's something that I have to give credit to former Republican, Republican Ron St. Angelo, to realize that we should look at a statewide firearms trafficking task force and when we had it in place, ladies and gentlemen, it worked. We actually were able to get a lot of guns off the streets through our State Police and with the help of our local law enforcement, and this brings a lot of issues into mind, whether it's our urban areas or suburban areas or store purchases or whatever you want to call this.

This is probably one of the most important things we're doing here. We're actually putting monies up, a million dollars to fund this, to fund to help make our state safer.

And when I started earlier, I heard that from a lot of the gun owners. They would say, why are you

penalizing us? Why do you penalize us, and we have individuals within our streets that have guns illegally?

We would stand behind you and we stand behind you to get those guns off the street. So I think this is a strong investment for our inner-cities, for the people of our state. I think that we need to go a longer way, Mr. Speaker, not maybe a longer way on more gun issues, but as I said earlier, as the Father said, as a society in nation.

So I thank you for your time and I will yield to Representative Fox.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Fox, you have the floor.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I, too, had the privilege of serving on the Gun Violence Subcommittee of the Task Force that was established by yourself and the other leaders and it was, it really was a privilege. It was a group that was put together with equal numbers Democrat, Republican. Each had their own equal number of Representatives from the House and the Senate and together with Representative Dargan as

well as the Ranking Member of the Judiciary Committee, Representative Rebimbas, and it was a real privilege also to serve under the Chairs, Senator Looney and Representative Miner.

I know that the, this specific subcommittee did come up with two different sets of recommendations, but they're, I think, one of the things that's sometimes missed is that there really was a lot of overlap and there really was a genuine willingness to go further than many had ever gone before in terms of addressing these issues.

And I think it's important that we recognize that because I know there was some criticism from one side or the other, but I really think everyone from the start of this process until today has always acted, listened to each side and always done their best to try to bring a consensus and I think there really was a willingness for that.

And I think this product that has come together as a result of the meetings by leadership is a recognition of that.

I, Representative Dargan and I did attempt to divide up the, this portion, the gun violence portion of the bill. We, I'll be jumping around a little bit

and I'm sure there will be some questions. We'll do our best to answer those.

The first section that I would look to would be Sections 18 to 22 and that's the creation of a deadly weapon offender registry. This is something that the, that law enforcement, as well as urban leaders, urban mayors, have been asking for, for a long time and what this will do is, it's been a top priority for those, especially for law enforcement for a number of years, and what it will do is require individuals who have committed a crime with a deadly weapon upon their release from prison, to be registered for a period of five years on this deadly weapon offender registry.

And they must take steps to confirm their address on the anniversary, on each anniversary. They also must notify DESPP if there is a change in their address. And while this information is not a public record, it is something that will be of tremendous value to law enforcement and it's something that they really stressed as a way for us to fight not only the terrible tragedies that we saw in December, but the ongoing especially handgun violence that takes place in our cities, and it's something that was important. It's a big part of this bill.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there is an expanded assault weapon ban and there's a list of firearms that will be added to the assault weapon ban.

Also, there's a change in how you can define an assault weapon. It will be those with a detachable ammunition cartridge and now one feature as opposed to the current assault weapon ban, which has two features.

Also, it is important to note that those who currently own one of these firearms or more than one of these firearms would be able to get a certificate of possession, which will enable them to, and they can do this by January 1, 2014 and it will enable them to have this gun registered and they can continue to own this gun, so there is no taking of the guns as part of this enhanced definition of assault weapon but it will require the coming forward and acknowledgment that these guns are registered to a certain person.

Also, Mr. Speaker, and I know this was discussed in the Senate, there is an inclusion in many of our firearms statutes to also include ammunition and the possession, the purchase of ammunition and so that is included in many of these sections. That would be seen in Sections 33 through 41.

Also, and I know this was a part of not only the discussions in the gun violence subcommittee, but also amongst the discussions of the leaders, there are enhanced penalties for many firearms offenses. Many of the felony crimes are enhanced a step up. Also, there are some mandatory minimum sentences for certain crimes involving a firearm and there's a list of those.

I'm sure the Members, if they go through the bill, or if they look at the OLR Report, there's a chart that they can go through and hopefully that would be helpful for them.

Also, if you turn to Section 56 there's a provision with respect to mental health look backs, and current law says that an individual cannot possess a gun if they've been confined by an order of the Probate Court to a mental hospital during the course of the past year, the past 12 months.

What this does is it would enhance that, increase that period from 12 months to 60 months. It also incorporates a provision for voluntary commitments and those are the situations where somebody may decide that they need to check themselves in for a period of 72 hours, but upon release, current law would not have

any provision that would prohibit them from buying or acquiring a gun, and what this does, it says that those who have been voluntarily committed would not be able to purchase a gun or acquire a gun for six months.

Also, Mr. Speaker, there's a section, Section 57. This deals with the risk reduction credit program. Back about ten days ago on March 22nd we had a public hearing and as part of that public hearing there was a bill that had been filed by the Judiciary Committee, and what it did was, it made clear that under current law, as we know, there's certain violent offenses that the Board of Pardon and Parole says you have to serve at least 85 percent of your term and that's been the law for a number of years.

And what this bill does is, it says that for an individual who has been convicted and is serving a sentence pursuant to those, one of those violent offenses, they must serve 85 percent of their original sentence, irrespective of whether they obtain risk reduction credits. So there is, that is also part of this bill we're dealing with tonight and it's something that we did here in Judiciary Committee about ten days ago.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I think that covers my end at least for the summary portion and I believe the order is Representative Wood is next, so if you'd call on her.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. For purposes of discussing the mental health portion of the bill, I recognize Representative Terrie Wood.

REP. WOOD (141st)

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's very emotional, this whole issue and it was certainly a privilege to serve on this bipartisan task force, and many thanks to you for creating this, all of the leadership, Representative Aresimowicz and Representative Cafero.

I'd like to start off with a few thank yous. Thank you to Senator Toni Harp. She was absolutely wonderful to work with. Very thoughtful and highly knowledgeable and just a joy and I think we did accomplish what we set out to accomplish.

I'd also like to thank the Legislative Staff that supported our work. In an already busy Legislative Session, they absolutely dropped everything when we needed them. Jason Stark of House Republicans, Cara

Pasarelle of House Democrats, Katie Duggan of Senate Democrats and Mike Goodwine of the Senate Republicans.

I'd also like to thank Marilyn Giuliano and Debra Lee Hovey for their special expertise in the school mental health situations and how the schools deliver their services. It was very helpful.

So on to the bill. This deals with Sections 64 to 69. There were four consensus items and the first one is regarding mental health first aid. In the overriding theme of our working group was the effort and the importance of de-stigmatizing mental illness. It still is a frontier that hasn't been addressed and it's still something we don't want to talk about and we need to talk, and this is the opportunity to make it important and start talking about it.

What the first section deals with is requiring the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, otherwise known as DMHAS and State Department of Education, SDE, to create a program that trains people in recognizing the signs of mental disorders in children and young adults and connects children and young adults showing signs of mental disorders with an appropriate professional. This is what mental first-aid training is.

And I did just a quick sidebar. I did take the training a month ago in Shelton at the Recovery Networks Program and I can't stress enough how important it is for everyone to take it. It's a 12-hour course. I already had a good, solid working knowledge of mental health issues and behavioral health issues and I learned a tremendous amount and I think it's really incumbent on all of us to lead in this and take the course. We will be offering it here at some point probably this summer.

The second part of this Consensus Item Number One is includes a program and list of items for SDE to insist and encourage local school to include the mental health first-aid training in their in-service days.

May I sidebar for a few of the --

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Absolutely.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Okay. We had three kids that went through public school and there were issues, and I have many friends whose kids also went through the school system and there are some simple anxiety issues that if the kids

are dealt with early, they don't grow into anger and frustration issues.

So again, I can't stress the importance of this, of early identification and intervention.

The third part under Consensus Item One is, it requires the Commissioner of Education to consider if programs should be required in teacher prep work for a professional certification. So this would be, I hope, mandated for any future teachers to learn, to take the mental first-aid training and learn more about it.

The Consensus Item Number Two is Section 66 and this deals with the Task Force, which would report back February 1, 2014 in time for the next Legislative Session. There were seven topics, consensus topics, that the mental health working group would deal with. I'll just read a couple of them.

Improving behavioral health screening.

Closing gaps in private insurance coverage. We did hear a lot of that in the 12-hour public hearing that mental health parity is much needed and there are tremendous gaps in the service.

Addressing the insufficient number of certain behavioral health providers. I know our state is lacking in child psychiatrists, so what we might be

able to do to train them and attract them and keep them here would be important.

Two additional school security ideas were to provide intense under the mental health task force, would be to provide intensive individualized behavioral health intervention services in schools for students exhibiting violent tendencies.

The second part of this is to require the State Department of Education to provide technical assistance to school districts concerning behavioral health intervention specialists.

The Consensus Item Number Three, I'm sorry. There were a few other non-consensus items under the task force and some of these were involuntary commitment, outpatient involuntary commitment. Also, duty to report, which we felt certainly had a great deal of merit but it was too short a timeline to do it in this period of time but it should absolutely be looked at more in depth.

Possible behavioral health screenings of public school children.

Requiring disclosure of communications by mental health professionals, that's the duty to report, which New York State I know is having difficulty now

enforcing it and it's a very difficult issue and again, requires a lot of in depth discussion and research.

Consensus Item, oh, and the mental health task force would be 20 voting members.

Consensus Item Number Three regards direct service providers. DMHAS would expand the Assertive Community Treatment, which is ACT teams to three cities that do not currently have the program, add the Assertive Community Treatment Program as a recover-oriented mental health service delivery model, which focuses on fostering an individual's ability to live in the community through psycho-social rehabilitation.

And these are the more difficult and challenging forms of mental illness. ACT teams treat persons with severe and persistent mental illness who live with serious impairments that hinder their ability to seek treatment autonomously. Services are delivered by multi-disciplinary health staffs who work in mobile teams to help clients achieve self-sufficiency and increase quality of life.

Services are tailored to the individual and are provided continuously with no set timeframe in order to ensure continuity of care giving. Very important

effort and it's a great success the people that are getting this treatment.

A couple of the other treatments are Melissa's Project. Oh, Section 68 is required DMHAS to provide case management and coordination for people with mental illness who are not involved in the Probate Court system. This is based on Melissa's Project and Melissa's Project is a guardian ad litem services core program. It's been very successful in the Valley area, and it's based on a guardian model of mental health care management established in 2002.

Their mission is to be an innovator in the effort to empower people with mental illness who receive services to act as partners with providers, policy makers and family members or guardians and ensure that services meet their expressed needs and wishes and improve overall care in the public mental health care system.

The last Consensus Item is Number Four, which is Section 69 in the bill, and it establishes Access Mental Health, and this is the Connecticut version of the Psychiatry Access Project modeled after a very successful Massachusetts program.

Access Mental Health is, the goal is to ensure that all youth in Connecticut have child psychiatry and behavioral health services that are accessible through their primary care providers. Access Mental Health will provide primary care providers with timely access to child psychiatry, consultation, and when indicated, care coordination and transitional services into ongoing behavioral care.

I just wanted to add a few notes, a few thoughts of my own on this. Again, this was a very, I think one of the most important parts of this bill.

When I first heard about this shooting in Sandy Hook, and I think all of us, it's right up there with knowing where we were when we heard about 9/11. I think every one of us forever will remember where we were when it just, you don't forget it.

We can make more restrictive gun laws, but that's not going to prevent future Sandy Hook or Aurora, Colorado's from happening without major changes in our mental health care and behavioral health care system and I think we're kidding ourselves if we don't consider this pretty seriously.

And I find it illogical and quite frankly, offensive, that some see mental health efforts as a

red herring against efforts to increase gun control. I heard that from a number of people and I thought, somebody's out there spinning it, and that's just totally false.

The common denominator in all these mass shootings was the mental health and emotional instability of these perpetrators. Had they not had access to guns they possibly would have found other means to inflict destruction.

As a society, we cannot continue to under-serve or ignore mental health and behavioral issues. They are at the core of so much of the violence that occurs in our world today. We have the responsibility to learn more, lead more as Legislators and educate our citizens about mental health issues and effectively address them. Mental health and behavioral issues, and address them.

In closing, I'd like to share an Elba Marquez Green's testimony at the Mental Health public hearing on January 30th. Ms. Marquez Green is a licensed marriage and family therapist whose daughter Anna Grace died at Sandy Hook School.

There were three key points to her testimony. The need to de-stigmatize mental health and increase

access to treatment. And this is a woman who wrote this a month after her daughter died. She was very clear on what was important.

Identify gaps in the state's current mental health system. Implement new family strengthening programs while enriching existing ones. It's pretty compelling to hear that.

Let's take this opportunity to learn more about mental health and behavioral health care issues and address it. This is an important issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Representative Wood. I recognize Representative Megna of the 97th.

REP. MEGNA (97th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, before I begin describing the commercial insurance mental health aspects of the claim, I wanted to acknowledge people who worked on this. First of all, your tremendous leadership on the issue, Mr. Speaker, and that of Majority Leader Aresimowicz. I truly believe it was your methodical, thorough, bipartisan leadership that got us to a good place today with this bill.

I also would like to acknowledge the mental health working group, particularly under the leadership of Representative Wood. It was a very cooperative, a bipartisan working group and it was a very healthy functioning group.

I also want to acknowledge the work of the Program Review and Investigation Committee, who presented us with a report really disclosing many of the defects in the commercial health insurance marketplace with respect to mental health coverage.

And last, but not least, the advocacy of Vicki Veltri and the Office of Health Care Advocate. Her and her staff clearly stand in the light of people trying to navigate through the health insurance claim process and really more so with people with mental health issues. She was such a pillar of support in putting together this aspect of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, the commercial insurance piece starts at Section 70. The first Section 70 comes up with a definition of clinical peer. This is the individual that the insurance company or contracted by the insurance company to make mental health and substance abuse disorder services decisions and through Program Review and Investigation as well as a

lot of testimony heard in front of our Committee, we learned that often this individual has credentials that may be not even be related to mental health.

And what this Section does is, require training and education and background that will give them a better education in making a determination and in discussing with the health care professional of that mental health patient in determining the service.

Section 71, Mr. Speaker, qualifies urgent care request, adds in mental health issues and substance abuse disorder issues into the urgent care request and requires the insurer to make a pre-authorization within 24 hours of that request.

Section 72, Mr. Speaker, designates disorder treatment criteria, which is criteria that should be referred to by all companies to come out with some kind of uniform logic and rationale in determining whether or not a mental health service is covered.

And in the event if a carrier deviates from that disorder treatment criteria, they are required to post that on their Internet site so that information is available for the insured to see why their logic is any different than other carriers with regard to that type of service.

Section 73 permits insurers to offer informal peer to peer conferences between the health care professional prescribing the treatment and the professional reviewing the claim on behalf of the insurance company.

We had heard during testimony that sometimes when the health care professional for the person seeking mental health treatment calls the insurer to talk to them about the issues or the service, that often that would be counted toward the first step in the appeal process or an internal appeal, and now this will be permitted and the individual, the patient, will still be entitled to that internal appeal process as well as the external appeal process.

Section 74 actually, I spoke about it before, requires the determination on an appeal of a mental health or substance abuse claim within 24 hours, the norm was 72 hours.

Section 75 requires notices for final denials in the adverse determination process to include consumer friendly information, including contact information for the Office of Health Care Advocacy.

Section 76 requires the Department of Insurance Utilization Review Contractor to make a determination

on mental health or substance abuse claim within 24 hours of receiving the file.

And Section 77 requires employers who offer self-insured health plans as well as the regulated market, to post available in a conspicuous place, information on the Office of the Advocate, Office of the Health Care Advocate.

Section 78 requires the Insurance Department to analyze data that insurers currently report for the consumer report card and trends for what we call the outliers and to investigate them.

What the Department of Insurance does now, is required by statute, is to do a report card on health care carriers and some felt that that report card needed to be more comprehensive in terms of mental health parity and how one company differs from another, and this will ask them to do a thorough analysis and place that on their Internet site for people to go to look when they go to shop insurance or compare one company to the other.

And finally, Section 79 will require the Department of Insurance to evaluate, report and make a presentation on its method for determining compliance with state and federal mental health parity laws.

We've had state statute as well as federal statute on mental health parity and many felt that since these statutes have been on the books federally and statewide that the Department of Insurance may not have been as aggressive in looking into this matter and bringing this matter forward, mental health parity. So this will require them to do that, bring the stakeholders together and this, and come and report to this Legislature and the Legislature, maybe a joint committee with Public Health and Insurance and Real Estate, have a public hearing on the matter, on mental health parity by 2014.

I skipped over an important aspect of Section 73, which I wanted to point out for the Chamber, Mr. Speaker, not only does it cover peer to peer conferences is what we talk about, but it also requires the health insurance carrier to cover the service up and until the adverse determination is made, which will bring a tremendous level of comfort to people with mental health issues dealing with that process, dealing with the stress and the fear of not having money for treatment, not being able to afford the treatment.

So this will allow, during that determination of whether or not the insurer is going to pay that service and the appeal process and the external appeal process, that individual will have coverage up until that point and there will be no liability on the individual for that cost. That is also in conformance with the Affordable Health Care Act.

With that, Mr. Speaker, that concludes the commercial insurance sections of this bill. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. For the purposes of discussing the school safety portion for the bill, I recognize Representative Andy Fleischmann.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to start by thanking the person who co-chaired the school safety subcommittee with me, Senator Toni Boucher, who used to serve in this Chamber, now in the Senate, has spent a long time working on education issues. It was an honor to be appointed to work with her and the 14 other Members of the House and Senate, who really did come together in a bipartisan manner to develop recommendations.

Our subcommittee included the leadership of the Education Committee, Senator Stillman, Representative Ackert, the leadership of the Higher Education Committee, including Representative Willis and Representative LeGeyt, the leadership of the Children's Committee, including Representative Urban and her Ranking Member.

We came up with a variety of consensus recommendations about 20 in all, and you, Mr. Speaker, and the Majority Leader and the Minority Leader did a phenomenal job, along with staff from all four caucuses and the fifth floor, our nonpartisan staff, to take these recommendations and turn them into good legislative language, so I thank you. I know it was a somewhat thankless undertaking as people were asking what was taking so long. It was hard work, and we appreciate it.

Big picture. The roughly 20 consensus items that the school safety subcommittee developed together fell into some broad categories.

School infrastructure improvements, school security, safety plans and standards, strengthening of our school bullying statutes.

And then for higher education, parallel approaches to safety and security planning.

To get into some of the most critical aspects, Section 80 sets up a new school safety infrastructure council. It's got all the commissioners who you would expect involved from construction services, education, emergency services, and their job is to come up with standards. What is the best practice for safe infrastructure for schools? Report that to the Public Safety and Education Committees, put that into a set of standards that are then used under Section 81 by the Department of Construction Services for all school construction going forward.

Section 82 simply requires the school superintendents affirm that they're following those standards.

83, that there's a school building project advisory council that currently exists and it's going to include the new standards developed by this new infrastructure council.

Sections 84 and 85 bring back something that was very sensible in 2007 and more sensible today, which is the Security Infrastructure Competitive Grant Program. This program was something that we sort of

defunded as we ran into economic hard times and leadership of this General Assembly saw fit to find $15 million of bonding funds to put into this program to be administered by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection along with Construction Services and Education.

And I was asked by a couple of colleagues how it would work. It would work just the way the old program worked, except that it's going to incorporate these new standards that are being developed and it will roll out in 2014.

Section 86 ensures that the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection will work with the Department of Ed to develop school security and safety plan standards by January of 2014 and there's a committee that's going to do that. This is to make sure that every school district and every school has plans in place.

We know that there were plans in place in the Newtown schools and that undoubtedly that those plans saved lives. We don't know as we stand here today whether every single school has shown similar foresight, and so this section ensures that.

Section 87 talks about the composition of a school security and safety committee. That includes a first responder, a teacher, an administrator, a mental health professional and a parent and anyone else who the Board of Education has deemed appropriate.

Section 88 takes a committee that we've already created, a School Climate Committee that helps protect the school against bullying and says that if there are instances of disturbing or threatening behavior those should go to this Committee that's already aware of bullying and is now hopefully aware of students who have ideation that is violent and potentially threatening to themselves and others.

Section 89 simply requires the Department of Ed report more to the General Assembly about how our bullying laws and this new aspect of the functioning of the School Climate Committees are working.

Section 90 ensures that everyone on a district Safe School Climate Committee gets, or the coordinator, I should say, the leader of that Committee, gets mental health and first-aid training of the sort that Representative Wood described quite nicely, and the state will pay for that training. So this is a mandate that is fully funded.

Let me repeat that, fully funded by the state, not imposed on any locality.

Sections 92 through 99 deal with higher ed and are essentially parallel to what I've described. Ninety-two make sure that each state and independent college submits a security plan to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, which Representative Dargan so poetically refers to as DESPP. That plan has to be reviewed every two years.

Every one of these universities or colleges has to have a threat assessment team that's appointed by the college or university president, again, parallel to what I just described in the elementary and secondary schools. Here we'd have a member of the police force for the campus, someone from the administration, someone from faculty, someone from senior staff, someone else from mid-level staff.

Section 93 allows the Board of Regents and Board of Trustees for UConn to develop their timeline for hiring police force to implement Section 94. It requires the Board of Regents study the creation of a police department for community colleges. We think this needs to happen. Obviously, you can't do

everything over night. Hopefully, we'll have that in place soon.

Section 95 makes clear that all armed security personnel on higher education campuses must be certified by POST, which I think is a very sensible provision and one that I'm discussing in a bipartisan manner extending to elementary and secondary schools, perhaps later in this Session.

Section 96 again, involves DESPP and requiring them to conduct security audits for all the state colleges and universities to make sure that indeed they are safe campuses.

Sections 97 and 98 and 99 are all essentially technical, making sure that we have proper statutory language to conform with the previous sections.

To wrap up, Mr. Speaker, you know, I'd like to thank Representatives Dargan, Fox, Wood and Megna for the summaries that they just gave the Chamber. You know, today as we waited for the bill to come from the Senate to the House, I, like many in this Chamber got into some discussions with concerned citizens who came to this building today because they were worried about the legislation that we were going to enact.

And I found that many had concerns that didn't actually relate to what was in the bill before us, and what I had a chance to talk about the actual contents of the bill, there wasn't a sudden agreement and singing of Cumbaya, but there was an acknowledgement that maybe, hmmmm, maybe some of the information folks had heard floating around wasn't as accurate as they had thought.

Firearms legally purchased in this state are not going to be confiscated. Those who make initial mistakes about registering things that they own, they're not going to be charged with felonies. There are going to be citations that are akin to parking tickets.

What we have in front of us is common sense gun control, common sense mental health reforms, common sense approaches to school safety, and I really think that that again is a reflection of the process that you, Mr. Speaker, and Senator Williams and all of the leaders, Representative Cafero, Representative Aresimowicz, Senator Looney and Senator McKinney undertook and followed through on in such good faith.

So I'm proud to have been the final person to describe this bill and I hope that every Member of

this Chamber will consider joining us in supporting it.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on the bill? Will you remark further on the bill? Representative Alberts of the 50th.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may, a question to one of the proponents. The Section that I'm looking at is Section 57, which was introduced by Representative Fox, but the question really pertains to temporary state permits. It might be something that Representative Dargan might be more familiar with.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

We'll start with Representative Fox. Please prepare yourself.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And actually, Representative Alberts is correct because I believe that was, I think I said Section 57 but I meant to say Section 59 earlier, so I think 57 is on the temporary permanent applications is Representative Dargan's.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan, please prepare yourself. Please proceed, sir.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. About a year ago I went through the process to get a temporary state permit, and as I recall, I went through a fairly lengthy process that began with an application, some fingerprints, the pain of several checks, and I resulted, it all resulted in a temporary permit being issued to me by the first selectman of my community.

That first selectman functions in Woodstock as the Chief of Police and as I recall, we had 60 days once we had that temporary permit, to then take that permit and bring it down to be, important to have a permanent photograph taken and to have the permit issued, and I had some questions as it pertains to what we're looking at here.

My understanding in lines 2422 through 2432 is that we're now contemplating that someone may be only able to apply for a temporary permit once per year, and I just wanted to get confirmation on that through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, through you. That is correct. There was some issues where Steve Dargan might apply to his local police department and be denied for whatever reason and then at his point of appointment within that respective community reapplied within that community, so that's what that section deals with, through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and that's my understanding as well. We had several caucuses dealing with the language that's before us, although we didn't see the final language until late last night. My understanding was through the caucus discussion that the primary impetus on this phrasing was to make sure that folks that perhaps had been denied might not be eligible to reapply for one year.

My concern as it relates to the language that's before us now coupled with this new proposed language is that it's very easy for that temporary permit to be lost, misplaced and individuals that might make a clerical error or an omission might misplace that

certificate. The 60 days might lapse and as I understand it, I want to be clear that there may be the opportunity for folks that have had a lost or misplaced temporary permit, to be issued a new one speedily by the First Selectman or by the town police in a situation where that temporary permit had not been denied.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. That presents a good question. You know, if there is, if that permit is lost, I would suggest or recommend for that individual either to call DESPP or his first selectman or that police chief to tell them at that time when it was lost, so they would have the opportunity to re-issue that temporary permit, through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Then for purposes of legislative intent, would the proponent be comfortable in events where there had been a lost or misplaced

temporary permit, one that had not been previously denied, that the individual may be re-issued a temporary permit at no additional cost within that 12-month period from the issuing authority? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is the question through legislative intent, that that individual similar to if you lose your car license, that you might actually have to pay that fee again. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I understand that the fee is one thing, but I want to be clear that we're not going to deny that person an immediate attempt.

The language here suggests that there may be a 12-month delay and I want to get confirmation that in a situation like that, that the 12-month delay would not be in place, that someone may be able to apply readily to get that temporary permit re-issued.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much. Through you, Mr. Speaker. I know that there's a lot of technical components to that, and I think that it might not be spelled out but we should use some good common sense that that individual for whatever reason if it is lost, that he or she would have that opportunity to get that re-issuance within that 12-month time. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alberts.

REP. ALBERTS (50th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I do thank the gentleman for his response. I think that goes to the spirit of what we're looking to address here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Mikutel.

REP. MIKUTEL (45th):

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to begin by offering my condolences to the families and surviving

relatives and friends of those who perished in that vicious attack in Newtown. No one should have to suffer like those people have suffered.

I also share the goal of all my colleagues here, which is to end gun violence. It is a noble goal and I want to achieve that kinder and gentler country that President Bush once talked about but we never achieved.

I also respect the views of my colleagues here, even though I don't always agree with them. I respect their opinions and I hope they respect mine.

I want to say that I do not see the necessity of E-Certing this bill at this point in time four months into this process, and I do not like the fact that the final bill will not have a public hearing.

My constituents have called me and they have many, many questions about this bill. I have questions about the bill and they will not get answers until after this bill becomes law.

I think the serious nature of this bill and the consequences and the impact that will have on our constituents warranted a public hearing. I regret that we did not have that public hearing.

It was my hope, sincere hope, that we could have reached a middle ground as we search for a solution to gun violence, the middle ground that protects the rights of gun owners and public safety.

Unfortunately, I do not believe that middle ground has been reached. Instead, people seem to go out of the way to put gun owners on the defensive. They were, in my opinion, excluded from the process. They should have been part of the process if we wanted to reach a middle ground.

Some even demonized them for exercising their First Amendment rights, and I won't go into all the details there about who's a fringe person and who's not a fringe person.

Here's a novel thought. Stopping the madness of gun violence begins by changing the behavior of people. It begins by changing the hearts and minds of people through an education system that focuses on human values. How's that for a novel idea?

In that respect, gun control efforts are simplistic solutions. They do not address the root causes of violence, in my opinion. The bill before us essentially is a gun control bill. It promotes, it

primarily bans semi-automatic rifles, which account for a very small percentage of gun violence.

This bill before us will not stop the gun violence in urban areas. Most of you know, I don't have to tell you, that most gun violence is caused by hand guns, not addressed in this bill.

But the bill accomplishes one thing for certain and that is that it makes it very difficult for responsible citizens to exercise their constitutional rights under the Second Amendment. But again, that will not stop gun violence.

The bill fails to account for our larger dysfunctional society. It fails to account for our culture of violence, which is aided and abetted by an increasing prevalence of violence in the media.

Why aren't we making the same effort to restrict access to violence in the media as we are for restricting access to firearms? Because the answer is pretty simple. The First Amendment limits what we can do about media violence.

I would also submit that the Second Amendment also limits what we can do about guns. Make no mistake. There are some good things in this bill, and things I support.

In fact, part of this bill reflects a bill that I introduced on school security through a school construction grant.

And Representative Dargan made a very good point about the success of a statewide gun task force. That is a very important piece, in fact one of the most important pieces in this bill because it will work. It has worked in the past. We should have kept it up. We should have funded it continuously. It went after the bad guys. It took the guns off the streets, and it worked.

But we failed to fund it. I'm glad to see it's back in this bill.

We all share the same common goal, but for me the bottom line is, the bill as constructed will not achieve its objective of significantly reducing gun violence. I wish it were otherwise.

I do not believe it will work because it targets the wrong people. It focuses on responsible gun owners when it should focus on the criminals and the dangerously mentally ill. Much, much, more could have been done in those areas.

The absence of a uniform national ban on semi-automatic weapons will make this law nearly impossible

to enforce. Do we expect our State Police to set up check points on our state highways to search for motor vehicles that are bringing illegal guns into our state?

It will not work because criminals and madmen have no intention of obeying the law, and it will not work because bans do not work. Prohibition proved this. When the federal government tried to ban alcohol, it resulted in an explosion of organized crime by creating a black market and it created widespread disrespect for the law.

The same can be expected by banning firearms that many of our constituents feel it is their constitutional right to own and such bans may alienate them from the police and the law. These people have concerns for protecting themselves and their loved ones, which may trump their desire to comply with the state law.

Finally, I believe it will not work because of our state's dysfunctional mental health and criminal justice systems.

Our mental health system is broken. We are not going to put the resources in there to make it work

properly. We are not going to fund the programs that should be funded.

I hope I'll be proven wrong on this, but I do not believe I will. The bill fails to identify and treat the dangerously mentally ill, the ones we are, the ones who are doing the mass shootings. It does not provide for court ordered mental health services for people who refuse treatment for their severe mental illness, impose dangers to themselves and others.

De-institutionalization in many ways was a failure. It put mentally ill people on the streets and gave them no support and now we are paying the price.

While it does provide for some enhanced penalties for gun crimes, the reality has been, we have a criminal justice system that plea bargains away most of the severe penalties. Justice in this state all too often is plea bargained away.

In short, there is too little accountability in both of our mental health system and our criminal justice system. There are too many gaps and I have little faith that things will change until there is better oversight and accountability.

Consequently, it is my considered opinion that any sense of safety and security that we would expect from passage of this bill would be a false one.

I believe that there are arguments, the argument that this bill infringes upon constitutional rights has merit. The bill significantly expands Connecticut's assault weapon ban to include 100 specified weapons and other weapons that fail the physical characteristics test.

Many of these semi-automatic firearms are the most popular and common firearms in the country and that raises constitutional issues. Why? Because the U.S. Supreme Court held in Heller, that people have not only a constitutional right under the Second Amendment to bear arms, but the Court majority also supported the holding in United States v. Miller that the sorts of weapons protected are those in common use at the time.

Consequently, any proposed legislation placing restrictions on firearms ownership must comply with the Court's Heller ruling that firearms that are in common use are strongly protected. In my opinion, that is not happening in this bill.

It should be noted that under Heller, the Court said that Second Amendment rights is not a right to keep and bear any kind of arm, and there are restrictions that we can place on guns. They said that you cannot own machine guns or armor piercing bullets, but they did not say when they could have said in Heller, that assault weapons could not be legally held.

The Court was silent on that matter, and I think their silence was telling. I'm not going to go through all of this. I could go say more but I think I've made my point, and I hope this is a perspective that is shared by many of my constituents, and they have a point of view, and I felt it was necessary for me to express that point of view here.

We all want a better world. We all want the world to end this madness of gun violence, and I wish I could say I could support this and I wish I could say that it was in this bill, because I have spent my whole political career here trying to stop violence. This is not a new thing for me, and I'm not here just to talk and say words, believe me.

I cry for people who suffer the way they suffered and anyone here who has heard me speak on the death

penalty know how it, deeply I feel about the murder of innocent victims. Every one of their deaths, be it in Newtown or in Hartford diminishes me, and I care about those people and I wish we had a real solution to this problem.

I don't see it here, and if I voted yes, I would be saying that I think we have a solution, and I can't say that. I can't say I think we have a solution, so I cannot in good conscience vote for this bill. Thank you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Thank you, Representative Mikutel. Representative Nicastro of the 79th District.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. It's nice to see you up there. Good evening to you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Thank you, Representative. Please proceed.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Madam Speaker, I'd like to take you on a little journey and you'll understand why.

I'm a 17-year-old young man. I graduate from high school. Shortly there afterward, I turn 18 and I

choose to join the military. It could be any of our military. I'll say the Army to get my point across.

I learn how to use weapons like an M-16, an M-60. I learn how to become very proficient in all of these weapons. Oh, I'm in the National Guard, okay? In Connecticut National Guard, and I become very proficient in these weapons.

Then all of a sudden, Madam Speaker, my unit is called to active duty over in Afghanistan or Iraq, whatever the case may be. So for the next year I find myself in situations where I'm fighting for my life. I'm 18 years old. I'm fighting. I'm shooting at people. They're shooting back at me.

Let's assume that I'm fortunate and I don't get hurt and I come home. Now I'd like to do something and I'm so involved. I want to go out and I want to buy myself a center fire rifle. I'm going to be denied that because I'm not 21 years old. Yet, I'm good enough to go across and fight in a war and put my life on the line, but because I'm not 21 years old I don't qualify.

It said here in Section 1 if I may, Mr. Speaker, it says that these stricter limitations don't apply to members or employees of local police departments,

departments of emergency services or public protection or the Department of Corrections or state and U.S. military personnel for use in the discharge of their duties.

Well, this wouldn't be in the use of the discharge of my duties. This would be for my own personal pleasure. If I'm good enough to be able to handle an M-16, an M-60, go overseas and fight for people's liberty, and fight for this country and put my life on the line, then why should I be denied the right to buy a rifle?

And that's my question to you. I'd like to know why.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Nicastro, I don't know if there was a question posed or to whom you wish to direct your question. Can you specify?

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I don't know that there was a question posed, and I don't know to whom you would refer your question?

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. The question is that I've served in the military. I'm in the National Guard, Connecticut National Guard. I've come back from overseas from a year's duty in Iraq or Afghanistan. I want to buy a rifle, but I'm not 21.

Am I being denied the right to buy that rifle?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan, I believe is probably best suited to answer that question. Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The way I read the bill, the answer would be yes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Nicastro.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

The answer is yes, he said.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

That is the answer to the question, yes, Representative Nicastro.

REP. NICASTRO (79th):

Mr. Speaker, I find that very disheartening. If I can put my life on the line and if I can go overseas and fight for this country and fight for people's

rights and use weapons that are a heck of a lot more powerful than what we're talking about, to deny me the right to have a rifle to go target practice or something, I find very unacceptable.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Art O'Neill of the 69th.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Today is obviously a very serious day for the State of Connecticut and for this Chamber and for all of the Members here. It has taken us a long time to get to this day and we have before us a piece of legislation that is a response to the massacre that occurred on December 14th in Sandy Hook, and it has many parts.

From my count it has 99 Sections and 139 pages. It is normal in this Chamber for a bill to be brought out by the chairman or the co-chair of the committee of cognizance. This bill being an E-Certification doesn't have a committee of cognizance, and so that wasn't going to happen.

But it's extremely unusual to have a bill brought out and be summarized by, I believe no less than five

individuals, including the Co-Chairs of the Education Committee, the Insurance Committee, the Judiciary Committee, the Public Safety Committee, as well as Ranking Member Wood.

So it's pretty clear to me that this piece of legislation contains a lot of different elements and addresses different aspects of the problems that we have been discussing so far, and in fact, really comes from, or if it were a regular piece of legislation, would come from as many as five different committees.

And many of the parts of this piece of legislation appear to be non-controversial and probably will pass, would pass if they were voted on separately, unanimously in this Chamber.

Other parts of this legislation as has already been indicated by the debate so far, are very controversial and individual Members might be torn, and I believe many of them are torn between wanting to vote for this piece of legislation and the parts of it that are without much controversy and are almost unanimously agreed to on the one hand, and those parts of this piece of legislation that are very controversial and about which they have grave doubts.

And so, we have a problem because of the way that we are responding to this situation, to the massacre in Sandy Hook, to the problems that we face that have been brought to light by Sandy Hook, and we're addressing it all in one, comprehensive bill.

But the problem with that comprehensive bill is that it covers so many different topics.

Now, we have within our rules a House Rule Number 27 that says that if a question under debate consists of two or more independent propositions, any Member may move to have a question divided and if the House adopts the Motion to Divide the Speaker shall rule on the order of the voting of the divisions of the question, and this is a motion that is relatively rarely made. It is a motion, which most recently when made, was subject to some debate.

It is a motion that I know is going to be itself somewhat controversial if it is made, but it is a motion that I believe would afford Members of this Chamber the opportunity to vote their consciences, their beliefs about this piece of legislation without being forced to compromise what they really believe in on one part in order to vote for or against a part that they did not believe in.

And so, with that, Mr. Speaker, I would make the motion, pursuant to House Rule 27, that we divide the question and that the division be as follows, that Sections 1 through 63, which I guess would be characterized as the gun sections, be voted on separately from the balance of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. The question before the Chamber is a Motion to Divide the Question.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Mr. Speaker, I believe this may be the only time I get to ask for it and when the vote be taken, that it be taken by Roll Call.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Before we get to that point, though, as you correctly pointed out, Rule 27 of the House Rules does allow for the division of a question. The first determination that has to be made in that context when this motion is made is whether or not the bill requested to be divided is, in fact, two separate elements that are subject to division. That is a decision under our Rules that is made exclusively by the Speaker without debate.

I do not intend to invite debate on that subject, because it is my determination that in fact, this is, this is a bill that is subject to division and may be dividable, given the fact that the separate sections of the bill as you've described it, are unique and separate topics.

And so under our Rules, I do believe that this question can be divided and the motion before us in that sense, is it divisible, is properly before us.

It is then up to this Chamber to decide whether the item, whether this Motion should proceed or not. We have varying rules with regard to and precedence with regard to whether a Motion to Divide is debatable and I think that we have had, in the past, different procedures on how to handle debate on the question of the Motion to Divide, and I think the better part of reason on this in the past has been that we do allow limited, very limited debate on this subject.

So given that precedent, I would suggest that we have a limited debate on this matter, limited to, I'll use some discretion in terms of the numbers of people that need to speak on the subject, solely on the subject of whether to divide the question or not, and if you would like to proceed on that subject,

Representative O'Neill, I'll recognize you for that purpose.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Yes, and very briefly, Mr. Speaker. I believe that the request for the division would serve the interests of the Chamber. There are Members, I believe, on both sides of the aisle who would love to vote for the entire bill as it stands before us.

There are other Members on both sides of the aisle who would like to vote for one portion, Sections 1 through 63, and perhaps not vote for another portion, the other balance of the bill.

There are Members who would like to vote against the Sections 1 through 63 and then vote for the rest of the bill if they had that option, and that the bill before us contains so many diverse parts and the interest of the Members in being able to vote for those different parts would be so well served by the opportunity to have a division of the question so that the feelings of the Members, their true beliefs about how this piece of legislation should be acted upon, would be given an opportunity to be expressed.

And so, I would urge the Chamber to vote for a division of the question to give the Membership that opportunity. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. I will recognize individuals who wish to speak. We have many people lit up on the board. I will entertain, as I said, a limited debate on this subject. I would ask that if you are interested in speaking on this issue on the, solely on the Motion to Divide and you're on the board, please stand so I can recognize you.

Representative Carter.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and gentlemen, I rise in support of this Motion. You know, as we began this process, we began this in a bipartisan matter, bipartisan manner, excuse me.

And each of us put a ton of time into this process, whether we were Chairmen, whether we were on the committees, or even if we were just following it, and I think one thing through this entire process, each different part of this task force had very different missions, and I think it's gone a long way to give all of us an opportunity to speak up on the

part that's maybe most important to us, and have that opportunity, actually have the opportunity to stand up and vote for it, or against it if that's where it matters.

I think it adds a great deal of credibility to what we've been doing in this Chamber over the last few months.

I would certainly hope our colleagues in here would give some great thought to dividing the question in this sense, because as a colleague, I think it would help me, and it would help me represent my constituency, and I think we owe it to each other.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Is there anyone else who wishes to speak on the narrow question of the Motion to Divide? Representative Aresimowicz.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in opposition to the Motion to Divide. I think a lot of the things that have already been said tonight is, we're responding to the tragedy in Sandy Hook, that this is a comprehensive bill that looks at the three areas that were in effect that day, to hopefully make

a difference, gun control, mental health and school safety.

Comprehensive bill. That's what we've been touting. That's what we've been talking about. It's completely within the rule, and I understand the many reasons given by Representative O'Neill on why it may want to be divided.

But it wouldn't do the amount of work justice that went in over the past two months by leaders of different parties, different bodies, in a bipartisan way.

Moments at the table when we discussed issues, not based on political party, but more where we came from, where our core beliefs were. There was passionate debate on all sides. There was passionate debate in the Committee level and we came up with this product and we said, it addresses the three areas.

Mr. Speaker, I urge rejection of the Motion to Divide. Let's continue on the path of being together, providing a comprehensive view to the issues that are in front of us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. We will not have a voice vote on the question of whether this should be a Roll Call Vote. I will ask the Clerk to make this a Roll Call Vote.

With that, will staff and guests please come to the Well of the House.

And just for clarity. A yes vote means that you approve, you're approving the Motion to Divide. You are voting yes. That's green. It's in favor of the motion.

A red is against the Motion to Divide. With that, will staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll. The House of Representatives is voting by Roll.

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll on a Motion to Divide. Please return to the Chamber immediately.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? Would the Members please check the board to make sure your vote is properly cast.

If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally.

Representative Luxemberg, for what reason do you rise?

REP. LUXEMBERG (12th):

Mr. Speaker, I vote in the negative.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Your vote will be properly recorded in the negative.

Thank you. Representative Cuevas.

REP. CUEVAS (75th):

Mr. Speaker, may I vote please?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

What?

REP. CUEVAS (75th):

May I vote negative, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

You would like your vote to be recorded in the negative. Is that correct, sir? Thank you.

Will the Clerk please indicate Representative Cuevas in the negative, which you've done, thank you.

Will the Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Mr. Speaker, on the Motion to Divide.

Total number voting 146

Necessary for adoption 74

Those voting Yea 51

Those voting Nay 95

Those absent and not voting 5

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The Motion fails. Representative O'Neill, you still have the floor, sir.

REP. O'NEILL (69th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm not sure if I, where I was when I made the motion, but for most of us, the journey that the Representative from Bristol mentioned, began on the 14th of December, a Friday and we started to hear the story about what happened in Sandy Hook. I was actually in a restaurant having a breakfast, wrapping up a breakfast and I was about to head over to Sandy Hook to get a haircut when the person I was with got a text from his wife saying she'd heard that there was a shooting in Sandy Hook and that everything there was being shut down in response to that.

We watched, I watched on television as most of us did, the full horror of what happened unfold, and with

it, as we understood more and more of what was going on there, I realized as I think most Members of this Chamber, that we were going to have to do something in response to what happened in Sandy Hook, and that that massacre of those 20 school children and 6 school teachers and other professionals was something that called out to us to act.

We've heard a discussion so far today about the parts of this bill, which have been agreed upon by the leadership and been worked on by many Members of this Assembly to come up with a reasonable balanced, well thought out approach.

I don't believe that anyone is totally satisfied with what has been done in this bill. I know that there are people in all of our districts that are unhappy with some part of it.

I know that I have constituents who are not happy. Some of those constituents are concerned about their right to own various kinds of firearms and to exercise their Second Amendment rights.

I know some of those constituents were the victims at Sandy Hook and even more, going a little bit further back in time two of my constituents were the victims of the shooting in Aurora, Colorado.

And so this is something that we have seen time and time again across the country. We've seen it here in Connecticut before. We have tried to address these problems, partly with issue of firearms. Perhaps a much larger issue of dealing with mental health and to our attention, Sandy Hook brought the issues of school safety.

And this is a piece of legislation, which however it may not be perfect, is, I think, a very good response for this Legislature to bring forward to the people of the State of Connecticut.

So, Mr. Speaker, I intend to support this bill. I know that there are people who are not going to be happy with that from my home district, from my hometown. I know that there are people perhaps on both sides of the divide on the gun issue that are going to be equally unhappy about that, but I think that we, in fact, have struck a reasonable balance on that issue as well as the other issues and that we are making a reasonable down payment on the issue of school safety and mental health that we should move forward on during the next Session and the next several Sessions of this Legislature because we will

not accomplish everything that needs to be done on those two issues tonight.

But we are making an important step forward. I urge my colleagues to support the bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Lemar of the 96th District. You have the floor, sir.

REP. LEMAR (96th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand here today like so many of my colleagues, before this historic and important vote, saddened and sickened by the devastatingly tragic events that occurred at Sandy Hook School.

I also stand here today as a father of three young children, as a proud resident and Representative of the great City of New Haven, a city where despite the relative safety of my neighborhood where I live and the district I represent, we've seen scores, scores of young boys and girls shot down in the city over the last 13 years that I've lived there.

Gun violence in our state is not new and it is far too common. It's not something that those of us from urban communities are unfamiliar with.

Sadly, I've had to speak with the parents of young children who have been victims of gun violence in my community and it's something we hear about and see on a weekly basis in some of our cities.

While I truly respect the constitutional guarantees that the Second Amendment provides and that the Heller v. D.C. Supreme Court decision had clarified, I recognize within each text that we, as Legislators, must determine and regulate the appropriate level of self defense that an individual is guaranteed.

It is clear that this is our responsibility and it is our charge and in each text it is explicitly, explicitly entrusted to us to determine.

So I do stand here today, proud of the steps that we are taking as a state, and I've heard from constituents in my district, many in fact, who are upset with the vote that I will cast this evening, constituents who believe that the vote we cast tonight will violate both the United States and Connecticut Constitutions, and again, I've read both the Heller decision and the Miller decisions numerous times over the last few months and I feel confident that we, as a Legislative Body, are well within our rights to pass

the following regulations and I believe these will make the residents of the state safer while protecting the basic liberties that our residents are guaranteed.

We will pass a bill that smartly bans the sale or purchase of large capacity magazines. We will impose extremely stringent regulations on the use of those currently possessed. We will expand our assault weapons ban to stop the future sale of all weapons of war that really have no place in our homes or on our streets.

In my city, though, in cities across the state, we don't often see violence with those assault weapons, so we do begin to look smartly at other things we need to do to reduce the gun violence we see.

We will start to require universal background checks for the sale of all firearms, and we will establish the first in the nation statewide dangerous weapon offender registry. Now this is something police chiefs have been pushing for, for years, and I'm proud that we're doing that as part of this bill.

This is vital to their efforts in stopping future crimes and identifying the most likely suspects quickly after a shooting occurs.

We'll do the new state issued eligibility certificates for the purchase of any rifle or shotguns, do the background checks on ammunition. These are all smart things and I'm proud to be here taking these preliminary steps.

Gun stores laws, ensuring that thefts from homes, the sad case of too many suicides, too many domestic disputes, too many accidental shootings that impact our communities. Again, smart choices that we are making as a state, smart steps that we're beginning to take.

Now we recognize that we can go further in reducing gun violence if we support our support for mental health services and ensure our communities where everyone in Connecticut has access to the care that they or a family member might need.

We focus on helping those individuals and their families overcome obstacles to accessing the mental health treatment and support that they need. We improve the mental health first-aid training. We improve the coordination of services with people with persistent mental illness. We established a pilot program to help secure care and coordination for children and care givers.

These investments, the investments in school security improvements as well, will provide a safer and more secure environment for the children while helping to ensure that they receive the care they need.

In closing, though, I think there are still more common sense regulations that should be enacted, and I tell you I will be pushing for those in the coming years ahead. And while I fear that the lack of a national strategy on preventing gun violence will surely mean that thousands more senseless deaths will occur due to gun violence. Many of those deaths will be in my City of New Haven.

I am proud to be here today, to be in this room with all of you to take these first steps toward a smart and comprehensive strategy to remove guns from our streets, to prevent senseless deaths in our communities, to set the stage due to our leadership for a broader, national, bipartisan approach to reducing gun violence across our country and I look forward to working with many of you to address some of the shortcomings that this bill currently contains and to take further steps in the months and years ahead to

ensure that all gun violence is eradicated from our streets.

Thank you, again. Thank you, Mr. Majority Leader. Thank you, Mr. Minority Leader and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Miner of the 66th.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good evening. Like everybody else in this Chamber, I kind of toiled through the last three months since we went into Session and even before that with what occurred in Sandy Hook and what has occurred since Sandy Hook, and I've begun to know that I grew up in a different place.

When I was in my teens, early teens, my dad wasn't used to guns. I developed a relationship with a couple of friends of the family who began to take me hunting and it began to be a journey for me.

When I hear about gun violence between human beings, it is so foreign to my upbringing. We moved to about 500 acres and my youth was spent running around 500 acres learning to fish, later learning to

hunt, all done responsibly, sometimes under the supervision of adults because it was required. I remember my dad took me to the local police department. A detective there showed me pictures of what can occur when human beings injure or kill others with guns. It left an impression on me that sticks with me today.

I have traveled all over the country with people hunting and fishing. They have contacted me after the Newtown incident. Everyone is horrified and mortal. They cannot believe that that incident occurred. It is so foreign to gun owners that that would occur. That is the shock in what we're doing here.

People have come to this place wanting safety, I think wanting justice. That may sound strange, but there was no living person that created this problem.

I remember sitting in Representative Cafero's office thinking, wow, this is awful. There are no words, and joined many of you in trying to deliberate over a deficit and we were in shock.

When I look through this piece of legislation, I see things that other people don't feel. I don't think it's intentional. I know the people that worked

on this bill. I know you all worked on this bill for the right reason.

Are there interests of others perhaps that are not in this Chamber that may have wanted more? Some here may want more. I don't know. But for my constituents and some of yours that have communicated with me in the last three months, gun owners, all of them law abiding, this cuts to the core.

They are frightened. They have asked me questions. I think they've asked you questions. We don't know what this bill does. This was put on our desk at 12:00 o'clock last night, I think maybe even early this morning.

But the ramifications in these pages are significant for everyone, and I'm not sure that we actually addressed the root cause. We may, by 2014 begin to deal with it, but we are going to change people's lives when this bill gets signed into law.

If I could, Mr. Speaker, through you, I have a few questions, perhaps to Representative Dargan if I might.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan, please prepare yourself. Please proceed, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Representative Dargan, I think in Section 1 of this bill, there's an effort to define how transfers, sales of guns will occur after the effective date of this bill, and what I want to be sure about is that when we speak of transfer, we're speaking in this Section of sale, not exchange.

I spoke earlier with you about the fact that under our current laws for hunting, target shooting, it's not uncommon for someone to hand a shotgun or a rifle to someone over the age of 14 for youth hunting, and am I correct, Mr. Speaker, through you, that this Section when it speaks to transfer, does not speak to that instant, it is the sale. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner. I'm sorry. Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Yes, I agree. Yes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

We're off to a good start. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And if I could ask the gentleman, on line 12

and then continuing on through 13 and 14, it seems to indicate to me that this language would not apply to any person who is a member or an employee of an organized local police department, the Department of Emergency Services and Protection or the Department of Correction.

Through you, is that intended to say that if an individual is issued that gun they can use it, meaning that if it was sold to the town or the state that they would be provided that gun for their service, during their service, or is it meant to mean that they can buy that gun personally? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the question. I think that if that, whatever that, either service revolver or long gun is issued in his and her position that that would be permissible underneath law.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so just to clarify, there's nothing in this passage that would allow an individual to be treated differently if they were a member or an employee of an organized police department in the purchase of a gun than you or I would be able to. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is correct. He or she in his or her employment as a Department of Emergency Service and Public Protection or local police department, they would have to qualify their personal weapons just like anyone else in the bill. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, my read of this Section says that the individual, not the state, not the town, actually would have the right to take delivery at retail of a semi-automatic rifle, that accepts a magazine with a

capacity exceeding five rounds, and that it's not actually sold to the town or the state.

Am I reading that incorrectly? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

I think, are you talking, just for clarification on Line 40? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. No, I'm on line 11, 12, 13 and 14. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Okay. Thank you very much. Can you repeat that question again, please?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Certainly, Mr. Speaker. Through you, Mr. Speaker, what I'm trying to get at is, I understand

that in this bill we are making changes in people's lives and what I want to make sure is that the changes to people's lives personally, as it pertains to gun ownership and gun purchasing, that we're treating everyone the same.

Some of us may remember that when we talked about whether you can continue to talk on a cell phone, we gave certain courtesies to certain classifications of people.

I want to make sure, through you, Mr. Speaker, that in this Section, a secretary for a police department, a custodian, person with a uniform and a badge, can't buy a gun for personal use outside what anyone else could lawfully do the same thing can do under this bill. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, that is correct. The individual or the individuals that we're talking about would just be involved within the discharge of their duties but not for personal use. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on Line 18 just for clarification when the word receive is used, that again is in conjunction when a sale and not when I hand my 14-year-old grandchild a 22 rifle to shoot at a target, that either he or I are in the violation under this Section as under the word received. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think that that Line 18 through 26 just clarifies after April 1, 2014, some issues of how you would have to buy that long gun and the permitting process involved within that and the certification within that. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Later on in the same Section, Line 176, I believe this is the area of the bill where we provide individuals who currently own guns or may acquire a gun to, I would call it, stub their toe, and they don't get the full force of law on

the first offense, but in there and the Section thereafter it seems like there's an opportunity for the court to make a determination that the offender made a mistake. It's a new law and in all likelihood they wouldn't re-offend.

What I want to make sure, through you, Mr. Speaker, is, in that process is there anything in this bill as you know it, through you, that would require the forfeiture of someone's guns? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner, ah, Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think this Section talks about a Class D felony unless known, stolen or altered, then it talks about a Class B felony.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the gentleman. I was referring actually to the paragraphs before, would be the new language from 164 onto 198 where it appears that there is an opportunity for an

individual to appear before the court. Okay, I'm getting a signal.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Yes, Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

I was a section ahead. Yes, it does. It allows at the court's discretion for AR in those specific cases.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So, to go back to my question, I guess and clarifying this for people, would that AR, could that AR include the loss of someone's guns? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. I can't give the good gentleman a good, honest answer. I assume that would

have to be at the discretion of the court unless my good friend, Representative Fox might be able to intervene and give his legal interpretation of that specific part of the law, if that's good to my good friend, Representative Miner. That will get me off the hook, so to speak.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner, would you be willing to redirect your question to Representative Fox.

REP. MINER (66th):

For my good friend, Representative Dargan, absolutely.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Much appreciated, Representative Miner. Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Yes. Actually, Mr. Speaker, if Representative Miner would not mind repeating the question just so I make sure I've got it.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Not at all, Mr. Speaker. My question is that as an individual as a first offender under this proposal,

it seems that there's a process by which the court could make a determination that the offense wasn't egregious and that they would not likely offend again.

What I hear from people is, they would be concerned about that one mistake being high enough in threshold so that any gun that they own would be taken from them.

So my question is, through you, is that within the realm of possibility under this Section, through you?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I did hear reference from Representative Dargan about the term AR or Accelerated Rehabilitation and as I understand it, this creates a D felony, which would be eligible for Accelerated Rehabilitation, in which case, if the court determined the individual was not likely to offend again in the future, which is the standard that the court looks to, the court could grant AR, provide a period of probation from anywhere from three months to two years and at that point the charges would be

dismissed. So that's how that would work, I believe, in that situation.

With respect to the question about the guns, I mean, the court would make its, I believe the court could make its own determination, but if the individual, if it was a good faith mistake and the individual was not likely to offend again the future, then I'm sure the court would take that into consideration.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So my sense is that it's still within the realm of possibility that kind of mistake could, part of that penalty could be that an individual would have to forfeit their guns, but that may be part of the conversation where it may not. That's my understanding, through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, yes, that's how I believe it would read.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Part of the problem that I have is that I'm not an attorney, so I'm, you know, trying to find my way through this bill like everybody else.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

We won't hold that against you, Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The thank you, Mr. Speaker. stands. Maybe I can move on to the next question, which I think I might be able to field back to Representative Dargan, my good friend, if I could, through you, please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Please frame your question, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

In Lines 280, the paragraph of 280 to 295, it looks like there's a sharing of information between the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection and the Commissioner of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

And my question is, why would we be sharing the information in that direction and not the other? I think what most people have been surmising is that individuals with significant mental health problems probably shouldn't be combined with firearms, and in this case it almost looks like DESPP discloses the information to Mental Health, and I'm not sure what Mental Health would do about it.

So through you, Mr. Speaker, is there any explanation the gentleman could give me for that action being taken that way?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to my good friend, Representative Miner. The, what I could tell you I guess if there's an issue of an individual that applies for a permit and has, I want to get this correct, who might have been committed through the Mental Health and Addiction Services, that they're able to share that information.

Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it's not a matter of an individual needing to know that someone has that level of disability, for which they wouldn't be allowed to buy a gun. It's whether the gun may actually be present and someone should be trying to pick it up? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Again, through you, Mr. Speaker, from what I've been informed that this will let them know what the mental status of that individual is at that specific time.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I could take the gentleman to Paragraph e. Lines 316 to 326 it talks about eligibility certificates and some people have asked me whether or not an individual's ammunition and guns, if you were to allow any of these new certificates to expire, whether that puts any of your

current, what I would call possessions, in jeopardy. Would the gentleman know whether that is the case or not? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, now the eligibility requirement, whether it's a pistol or long gun, is a five-year, is a five-year license, and you should be protected within that five-year process that you want to be in violation of it.

But if your license does expire within those 90 days that you can, yeah, you would not be able at that present time to buy any new pistols or rifles if you don't renew or comply similar to your car license, if you don't renew it.

With this, you won't be able to go to a store and actually buy additional long guns or pistols if you don't renew that license within that five-year or 90 day period of the expiration. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So it doesn't affect what you currently have. It affects your ability to acquire anything new. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, the answer is yes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In Section 5, Line 329, it says, well, it starts out saying a long gun eligibility certificate shall be revoked by the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection upon the occurrence of any event, which would disqualify the holder.

My question, through you, Mr. Speaker is, is there any infraction under Connecticut law for which that could be revoked?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I think the issue of guilty of a Class A misdemeanor would put you in the issue of reversing that permit. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So if I understand the gentleman correctly, in Section B it would have to be at least a Class A misdemeanor and not an infraction. Is that correct? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, it wouldn't deal with infractions but just a Class A misdemeanor. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, through you the question of ammunition as we move a little farther along in the bill, is there anything in the bill that would restrict a resident of Connecticut from buying ammunition outside the State of Connecticut, if

they're on vacation in New Hampshire and bringing it back home under this bill.

Would that be in any way prohibited under this legislation? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

The answer would be no.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

And if I could, through you, Mr. Speaker, I was looking at Section 16, which has to do with the eligibility certificate and imagining that for $35, which certainly is not an exorbitant amount of money, somebody could get themselves a certificate to purchase ammunition.

In the case where an individual does not normally buy a large quantity of ammunition, my concern is that if you took the $35 divided it by 5, and then used it against the normal cost of let's say a box of ammunition, it appears to me that it's almost as much as the ammunition.

Is there any provision under this bill where an individual would be allowed to buy ammunition without an eligibility certificate? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the answer would be no. He or she would have to apply for those different permits to do that. I know under the current law for hunters it's a little different, but underneath this law right now, in order to buy ammunition, they could hold, they could show their pistol permit or long gun permit in order for them to buy ammunition. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So under the provisions of this bill, then, you wouldn't be forced to buy an ammunition certificate. You could in fact buy it underneath a permit to carry, so there would be no need to incur the additional cost and that would be legal if you wanted to buy ammunition, not only for a hand gun, but for a long gun. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

That is correct. There are a number of different criteria that will make them eligible and in that instance, they would not have to cough up another $35 to the State of Connecticut in order to be in compliance.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When the gentleman brought out the bill he talked about magazines and it's my understanding under the bill that the magazines that are in excess of ten rounds would have to be listed on a registry with DESPP. Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

The answer to that is correct, yes. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And does that include magazines that would go in long guns and hand guns? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

That answer is also yes, correct. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And we had a brief conversation prior to the start of the Session about transport of magazines and I want to get to, I think, one of the issues that I've heard from sportsmen especially, and that is, how do you safely transport magazines under this bill.

And it refers to the transport of an assault weapon, which is pretty clear that the ammunition cannot be in the passenger compartment of the vehicle that it in fact is supposed to be in the trunk. It's

supposed to be unloaded. I think most people understand that.

But in the case of people that have no other vehicle but a pickup truck, if I could, through you, Mr. Speaker, if the magazines were encased somehow where they weren't readily available and unloaded, would it be the gentleman's understanding that as long as they're enclosed in something and not available to be picked up by a passenger or the driver, that that would be acceptable, that you don't have to have a vehicle with a trunk. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is a very good question because there was some concerns that if somebody did have a pickup truck and you want to go to a gun club or shooting, you could transport, which would be less than the 10 magazine even though it's 30, 50, whatever size that it is and then when you're at that facility you could use it in that capacity.

But an issue of transporting, even with the understanding of a pickup truck that of course does not have a trunk, the way that I'm reading it as they

you one, you either try to have it secured or locked up or within that case respectively and I think you would be in concurrence of the law. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So I'm hearing from the gentleman that it doesn't have to be outside the passenger compartment in the back of the truck. It can, in fact, be in it as long as it's secured away from reach of the driver or passengers. Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

That is correct. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. On Page 37, again, some more language about magazines and where they can be had, and where they can be loaded. So, at a person's residence there is no restriction on how many bullets could be in a magazine of a handgun. Is that correct?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

In someone's home, if that's the correct question? Through you, Mr. Speaker. I just want clarification on that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner, could you clarify that?

REP. MINER (66th):

Yes, it is, residence. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

That is correct. I believe through Line 1121 to maybe 1137 that talks about private, public/private clubs or your premise or business or property. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so, in the next section, when it talks about a place of business or

property owned by that person, it seems to limit the bullets to ten.

So if I owned a restaurant and when I close the business at 2:00 o'clock in the morning and I take the cash receipts out of the drawer and my gun would otherwise hold fifteen rounds, is it the gentleman's understanding that you would be limited to ten in that case because it's outside the residence? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the answer is yes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And then when we go to the next section it talks about target ranges, public/private shooting clubs and so on, again, is there, there does not appear in here to be any language about a limit and so to the extent that the magazine can be loaded, then it would be lawful to have a loaded magazine beyond the ten rounds?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the way I'm reading it, if you're at that facility, if you're at a specific facility, a gun club and you transported it to that specific public/private gun club and it's with less than ten and their magazine is larger than that at that facility, you would not be in violation of the law.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And so, if I go back to my earlier story of my youth, on the 500 acres that I grew up on in Wallingford, under this proposal, someone, if I invited someone over and the magazine on their gun was 15 rounds and mine was 15 rounds, outside the residence on that property, are we allowed to use those guns on my private property? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

I would believe the answer would be yes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Back to the issue of transporting, one of the questions that's been asked of me is, and I think it's been alluded to here, that all over the country we have different laws on guns, different regulations on guns.

And so, if someone were to be passing through the State of Connecticut with one of the guns that would be regulated and unregistered under this bill, are there any restrictions on people who would be passing through Connecticut that is either with the handgun that they have a permit to carry, or a long gun conceivably one of the assault weapons, as they're described in here, that they would have to have a permit for in the State of Connecticut or a certificate for, would they legally be able to drive past, through the State of Connecticut?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. I think that the existing law of transporting through the state remains the same.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you. So there's nothing in this new language that restricts it. Again, I'm not an attorney, so I just want to make sure that there's nothing in this new language that would change that right of passage, through you?

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not aware of that, but I wasn't in closed doors with the leaders when they negotiated this, but that's the best answer I could give you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm afraid to ask one of the people who were behind the closed doors.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

I know, I know. Representative Cafero and Representative Aresimowicz --

REP. MINER (66th):

No, I don't think we could do that, Representative Dargan.

Mr. Speaker, if I could, Line 1203, one of the passages in this bill that has caused me a little bit of concern is that in this section on what is defined as the new assault weapon, there's an attempt here to list certain firearms that would be encapsulated in that new definition, as I understand it, and on Line 1203, also on Line 1178, the words duplicates thereof with a capacity of any such pistols.

Is there any interpretation that the gentleman's aware of that could include other guns that are not on this list?

So, for instance, if it's another semi-automatic shotgun, or another semi-automatic handgun, it doesn't necessarily have any of the attributes of these, by virtue of it being a semi-automatic, that would not be sufficient for it to become an assault weapon under this language?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Mr. Speaker, through you, if I could yield, because I'm not the 1178-er, if I could turn 1178-er over to Representative Fox, if that's okay, to the proponent of the question? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner, would you mind rephrasing your question for Representative Fox.

REP. MINER (66th):

Absolutely, Mr. Speaker. My question is that if we go to 1178, Line 1178 or Line 1203, I think there is one other section here, the words duplicates thereof with a capacity, with a capability of any such pistols.

My concern is that these are all semi-automatics, and by virtue of the fact that they are, and this language is there. For instance, I have a 20-gauge semi-automatic shotgun at home because it is capable of firing as a semi-automatic. Does that, by that virtue, include it in this classification? Through you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And through you, no, I don't believe so.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When we get to Line 1248, we switch now to handguns and a number of months ago I was at a range and I was watching a lady as she appeared to be taking instruction and she had a handgun and had her left hand underneath what would have been that small section under the barrel, and on Line 1248, this actually talks about what I think was such an occurrence, and it looks like this might make that action of putting your left hand underneath a handgun and finding something that would insulate it against the heat, sufficient to qualify that handgun as an assault weapon.

Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, if that does fall within the definition here of one of the criteria,

then yes. There is an exception to that section that references a slide that encloses the barrel.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And my limited, but some knowledge of handguns, the slide that I think they're referring to would be the slide on the top of the gun that would allow a shell to go back into the chamber, and in this case it's underneath and as I read this, I guess what I'm trying to make sure here, Mr. Speaker, is that somehow in this language we don't, I think there are about 180,000 permitted, permit to carry gun owners in the State of Connecticut that we're not inadvertently making all of those guns assault weapons.

So that's what I want to make sure, through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, these are the features that were referenced in the bill. The shroud is one of them. I'm not sure if the specific example that

was given falls under this definition of shroud, but if it was determined that it did, then it would fall under this section of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

And so if it did fall under this section of the bill, then it would be considered an assault weapon?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Well, it would have to have, it would have to be a semi-automatic pistol that has the ability to accept a detachable magazine and have at least one of the following, and then it lists the features, and if that is one of the features that is determined to be part of the gun, then yes, it would be.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Let's see if I can get at this another way. Is it the intention, is it the intention of the language

to include pistols as assault weapons? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

No, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope somehow that will balance out with the other answers, but anyway, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

REP. FOX (146th):

Mr. Speaker, while I'm here, I don't know if Representative Miner has other questions, but I do want to clarify something I said earlier with respect to Accelerated Rehabilitation. I don't know if this is an opportune time to do so.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Well, Representative --

REP. FOX (146th):

He has the floor. I recognize that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Yes, I would appreciate that. If the gentleman would. So Representative Miner you're --

REP. MINER (66th):

Asking him to clarify a former answer on Accelerated Rehabilitation, through you, please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you, Representative Miner. The question was, if somebody is granted AR, Accelerated Rehabilitation, and then, let me just give the answer.

If one successfully completes Accelerated Rehabilitation, then the case is dismissed, so the charges against the individual is dismissed. So whether they're charged with a felony or one of the misdemeanors that are listed here, there is no felony conviction, they're not a felon or guilty of one of the misdemeanors here, so the court would not be in a position to impose conditions beyond that period of probation.

I believe my earlier answer was referencing during the period of probation when the judge can impose certain conditions in addition to the

timeframe, and that's what I was referring to, but it may have been misunderstood to think that the judge could impose conditions beyond the dismissal of the action, and that would not be the case.

So I hope that I can help clarify that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm just trying to look through my other questions here.

In a number of sections here, the bill attempts to deal with things that an individual may not want to register, not want to put on a certificate. In fact, there's even some language here when someone moves into the State of Connecticut and they own some of this, I'll call it a gun magazine that would be under our proposal, no longer registerable.

There's language in here that says remove the assault weapon or remove the magazine from the State of Connecticut. Through you, can that be done through some advertisement effort outside the State of Connecticut, through you?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

So I'm clear, Representative Miner, to whom were you directing that question?

REP. MINER (66th):

To be honest with you, I guess it's my good friend, Representative Dargan.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I see you're correct, sir. Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. He brings up a good thought and question with that. I don't see any language in there, at least for the educational component.

If someone's moving in our state, although during this conversation, a lot of people seem are going to be moving out of our state, depending on what we did with this bill from what I've heard from gun owners and manufacturers, but I think that is a very good point that we need to have some educational component in there, but I don't actually see it in the bill there. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, so as of tonight, we're not sure to what extent an individual who wants to, let's say, sell an assault weapon out of the State of Connecticut between now and the 14th, so they don't register it, we don't allow them to be sold here, I believe, upon passage of the bill.

We don't know whether that gun can be sold outside the State of Connecticut or whether the magazine can be sold outside of the State of Connecticut, through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Mr. Speaker, in that case, you can sell it outside the state and you could sell it to an FLL, somebody that's federally licensed within our state. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. I didn't get a chance to hear the gentleman. If he could repeat the answer, please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan, would you care to repeat the answer?

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Yes, you can sell it outside the state or within the state to a federally licensed dealer. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And then they have the ability, knowing that they can't sell it inside the State of Connecticut, they then can sell it outside the State of Connecticut, through you, Mr. Speaker?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The gentleman referred earlier, I think, not a lot earlier, but we need to do some advertisement here, Mr. Speaker, and I think he's spot on.

There are some sections of this bill that deal with people who move into the State of Connecticut, and I'm not really sure that everybody in this country is watching CT-N, I doubt it, but my guess, the Majority Leader says they are.

But my guess is that someone who let's say, took a job at the Aetna, might not give this a thought and the guns that we're talking about here that would be put on a list if you lived here, are not inexpensive, and so there may be some, and I'm sure they're not in this Chamber, that consider these to be throw away.

But I have constituents that spent upwards up $3,500 on some of these guns and assuming that someone moved here and didn't know they couldn't have it here, does the gentleman, I mean, has he been a party to any conversations where this would be on a website in the State of Connecticut along with some of the new rules, or on DECD so that when people look at moving a company here they'd know what the rules were?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I haven't been in conversation, but the good gentleman brings up a good point that if we're going to do this, we need to have an educational component either on the state level or through licensed, federal licensed dealers or other individuals within the state that are licensed to sell pistols or long guns to have that there, because we don't, my thought anyway would be that you wouldn't want an individual that did move into the state to go through that first procedure in the courts to get AR of no fault of his or her because of not knowing what the specific law was at the time that that individual moved into our state.

So I think that's a key component that we need to work with a number of different organizations.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Miner.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I thank the gentleman for his answer. I actually had a question on the education part of the bill, but I don't see the Chairman of the Education Committee here.

How about if I improvise? How about if I improvise and if I could, Mr. Speaker, call an Amendment instead for the moment, and then maybe I'll get the floor back after we're done. How's that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

That should kill a few minutes, Representative Miner, sure.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have an Amendment, if I can only find it. The Amendment is 5450, excuse me, I think it's 5457. If the gentleman might call it and I be allowed to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The gentleman is, will the Clerk please call LCO 5457. It will be designated House Amendment "A".

REP. MINER (66th):

Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, LCO 5463, please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

All right. The gentleman has called LCO 5463, which will be designated House Amendment "A".

THE CLERK:

House Amendment "A", to Senate Bill 1160, LCO 5463 offered by Representative Miner.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The gentleman has asked leave of the Chamber to summarize. Please proceed, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, what this Amendment does is replace Sections 1 through 63 of the underlying bill. It includes universal background checks, eligibility certificates for the purchase of long guns, increased requirements for the purchase of ammunition and magazines, safeguards, Internet sales and reconstitutes the Firearms Board, Examiners Board and I move adoption.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question is on adoption. Will you proceed, sir.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I think we all remember that preceding this evening's activity, the Task Force that was formed by leadership went through the process, including developing ideas for school safety and mental health and gun regulations, and in the gun regulation area, there was a bipartisan segment of that.

Members of the Republican Subcommittee were Representative Dan Carter, Representative Rosa

Rebimbas, Representative Jan Giegler and Senators Kissel, Witkos, Frantz and Guglielmo, and after a number of public hearings we began our deliberations about what our ideas might be in an effort to help provide a safer Connecticut and that is contained in this Amendment, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, what the bill does in Section 1 is, it develops a similar universal background check requirement to the underlying bill.

In Sections 2 to 5, it establishes an eligibility certificate for the purchase of long guns.

In Section 1 also, Mr. Speaker, what we chose to do is a solution to larger capacity long guns, was to treat them in a way that we treat handguns.

Members of the Chamber may know that most of the handguns sold in the State of Connecticut, in fact nationally, carry magazines with capacities beyond ten rounds. I've heard 17, 19, 15 and so when we looked at the larger capacity magazine long guns and spoke with gun dealers and gun owners, it was not universally accepted, but it was certainly understood that if we were trying to put some controls into that population of firearm, that requiring certain higher thresholds, such as moving the age from 18 to 21 made

some sense, and so that's what this Amendment does. It moves the age to 21 and it also tracks the secondary sale of that firearm similarly to the way we do handguns, unlike long guns. We don't currently track the secondary sale of that gun necessarily by serial number.

In this classification, that would be the requirement, just like it is in handguns.

As I said, Mr. Speaker, in the next Sections 13 to 16, have increased requirements for ammunition and magazines.

Sections 1,7, 8 and 13 speak to safeguards on Internet sales. We reconstitute the Board of Fire Examiners a little differently than the underlying bill does. We add someone with a mental health education to the Board and don't add two members. We keep the same number and that would require that somebody from the non-previously designated, such as the State Police. I think there are two public individuals that have no requirement to be designated. One of them would be someone with a mental health education.

Stricter mental health look backs under Sections 18 to 21.

Expanded safe storage as is in the underlying bill.

One of the things that we, even prior to the information being released last week was that we thought people who had been determined to be a harm to themselves or others certainly should not be able to avail themselves of a firearm.

We also in Section 18 require that the application for a pistol permit be done from the person's residence. We also include the changes to the early release program for gun crimes, establish a statewide deadly weapon offender registry list.

We require permits for gun shows be issued at the local level. We ban the sale of armor piercing incendiary bullets. We establish a statewide trafficking, Firearms Trafficking Task Force and increase the penalties for firearms trafficking and straw purchases.

In Section 22 we provide for a tax credit of $150 for the purchase of a gun safe. There's been a lot of conversation about safe storage and we think that's a good idea.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that when the vote be taken it be taken by Roll Call please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The question before the Chamber is a Roll Call Vote. I, well, if you could, sorry. Long day. I'd like to put that question to the Chamber.

All those in favor of a Roll Call Vote, please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

In the opinion of the Chair, the 20 percent threshold has been met. When the Amendment is called, it will be called by Roll.

REP. MINER (66th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And the last thing is that one of the pieces of the underlying bill that I've heard a lot from gun owners about is the two-day notification for change of address.

I don't know if Members of the Chamber know that under the sex offender registry list, we give them five days before they have to tell the State of Connecticut that they've moved, and under the underlying bill, the law abiding gun owners is two days. Somebody's shaking their head at me. Anyway, what this Amendment does is, it allows the gun owner

14 days. We understand the reason why the state would need to contact the person in case the permit was to be rescinded, and so we extend that to 14 days, and under the violent offender registry, we require them to notify the State of Connecticut within two days.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. The question before us is the House Amendment "A". As was the case on the Motion to Divide there are many people who are on the board to speak, who have indicated that they would like to speak on the underlying bill.

If you'd like to speak on the Amendment, and you're on the board, please stand so that you can be recognized. Representative Carter.

REP. CARTER (2nd):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this Amendment. Ladies and gentlemen, as we began this process months ago, the concept was we would have a bipartisan Task Force to look at these issues before us.

And as we did that, especially on the gun violence working group, as each working group, we came

together and worked in a fashion that we came up with some really, really, good ideas.

In fact, had we gone longer, I think we would have found more good ideas that would have even made this legislation stronger.

Now the reason I support this Amendment is, I support strong regulation on guns. Now if you think about it, you look at what this Amendment does. This Amendment looks at regulating guns. It's not about banning guns.

And I think that's important because you know, if you look to what our forefathers did many, many years ago, they believed in gun regulation, too. You know, you had to be in a militia, remember, you had a militia drill and they inspected your weapons. They understood that there was a reason to regulate guns.

But in this one Amendment, we have a chance to go back to what we came out with during that gun violence working group. That was a consensus group of items that would make real, strong, changes in our gun law in Connecticut.

Ladies and gentlemen, we can have the strongest gun laws in this state without banning assault

weapons. We can have the strongest gun laws in the state without even banning magazines.

By the way, I would support banning the magazines or long guns right now.

But if you take a look at this Amendment, this is exactly what we had as a bipartisan gun violence working group. I would urge everybody to think about that because I think for many of us we felt like you know, things kind of went amuck after that working group.

Ladies and gentlemen, this is a great opportunity to make strong changes in our gun laws without interfering with the Second Amendment, without making punitive regulations on our law-abiding citizens. It's a good bill. It's a good Amendment. I would hope everybody would stand up and vote for it. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark? Will you remark further on House Amendment "A"? Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As I said when I initially gave my introduction on the underlying bill,

there was a lot of good work that came out of the gun violence subcommittee of the bipartisan Task Force and there was certainly a significant amount of overlap and in many cases people were, I don't want to say surprised, but very encouraged to hear that people really took this seriously and made a significant effort to bring ideas closer together, and I think we did that.

We did not, however, reach a complete consensus and amongst the biggest areas of division were the assault weapon ban or expanding the assault weapon ban as well as the large capacity magazines and putting a limit on the large capacity magazines, and those were some important provisions to many people not only in this Chamber, but also our constituents and people throughout the State of Connecticut that we hear from.

You know, what are you going to do about these guns? What are you going to do about these 30 round magazines, 50 round magazines? And that's why that is ultimately in this bill.

But there was compromises made I think during the course of deliberations because if you look there's a number of criminal penalties that are also, it appears

to be rolled back, that are in the underlying bill but are not in this Amendment.

So there was a number of areas where people brought their concerns to the table and that's how we came up with the underlying bill that we're debating tonight.

So while there is some good, really important and good policy ideas that are incorporated into this Amendment, I would argue it does not go far enough and I would urge rejection of the Amendment.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark? Will you remark further on House Amendment "A"? If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber, please.

The House of Representatives is voting House Amendment Schedule "A" by Roll Call. Members to the Chamber please.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted. Members please check the board to make sure that your vote is properly cast.

If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally. The Clerk will announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

S.B. 1160, House Amendment "A".

Total Number Voting	149
Necessary for Adoption	75
Those voting Yea	45
Those voting Nay	104
Those absent and not voting	2

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

House Amendment "A" fails. Back to the underlying bill, Representative Alexander of the 58th.

REP. ALEXANDER (58th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on such an important topic tonight. And as a freshman Legislator, I do agree in the adage that freshmen should be seen and not heard. However, there sometimes comes moments of issues of great importance that even a junior member might have specific experience with, and might feel compelled to speak

about it, so I humbly thank you for the opportunity to speak tonight on this important topic.

As many of the people in this Chamber might know, I'm currently a company Commander in the United States Marine Corps, I mean a commissioned officer in the United States Marine Corps. I did four years active duty and I'm currently a Captain in the reserves, and what I'm going to say tonight in no way has any bearing or am I speaking for the United States Marine Corps, but as Legislators, we're charged, especially in a part-time Legislature, to rely on experiences we have outside this Chamber.

And for me as a Legislator, who spent four years in active duty and now in the reserves, I'm relying on that basis in the decision I make tonight.

And in the Marine Corps, all marines are trained as riflemen and all officers are trained as provisional platoon commanders and we all attend a six-month basic infantry school in Quantico, Virginia, and at that school I personally was trained to qualify with the M-16 A-2 service rifle and 9 pistol. We fired most of the weapon systems in the Marine Corps.

We learned to employ Mark 19 grenade launchers, 50 cal machine guns, 240 machine guns, you name it,

and we also conducted in that school, three live fire ranges where you had 30 marines on line moving different targets and firing, and I can say from experience, firing weapons, belt fed weapons, assault rifles, it is a very nervous and dicey undertaking. Even the most experienced marines that were training us would be somewhat hesitant and cautious during that experience.

And I don't mean that in a way to talk personally about my career, not that I did anything significant in my career as a marine officer, but I'm relying on that military background experience in the decision I'm making tonight.

And to start with, I was still on active duty a couple of years ago when the Gabby Gifford shooting occurred, and I remember getting done with a run on the beach in California, I came home --

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Alexander, could you suspend for just a moment, please.

REP. ALEXANDER (58th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Members of the Chamber, please take your conversations outside. One of our Representatives is speaking on the underlying bill.

REP. ALEXANDER (58th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you.

REP. ALEXANDER (58th):

And coming home and watching that on the news and seeing the fact that 30 round pistol magazines were used in the shooting in the civilian world to inflict the carnage it did, as someone who is a company grade officer in my career and went through this training, obviously like all of us, I was shocked and appalled.

But I also was shocked that 30 round pistol magazines were actually sold and used in the civilian world, and I felt at that point, I didn't know they even existed, I felt at that point they should have been banned federally.

In the Marine Corps, we don't have 30 round magazines for our pistols. We don't. And maybe we should, maybe we should, but we have 15 round magazines in our M-9 Baretta.

And there's a good friend of mine that I was stationed with in Okinawa. He's a chief warrant officer, a very trusty old marine. He was in a gun fight in Iraq and he had a situation where he was out of rounds in his M-4 carbine and he had to rely on that M-9 Baretta that was actually positioned on this flaque to save his life. That M-9 Baretta had 15 rounds in it, not 30 round mag. Now maybe the military should go to that. I don't know. I'm not here to make that claim.

But if the United States Marine Corps is relying on 15 round magazine in ground combat operations, in my mind, and again, I'm not speaking for the Marine Corps, but in my mind, the experience I see, I don't think it makes sense that we would have 30 round capacity magazines anywhere in the civilian sector, and I just wanted to bring that up to this Body that I don't think that makes sense.

Also, ammo is a controlled item in the Marine Corps. It's a controlled item. When it comes to having background checks for ammunition, that makes sense. In fact, most of my colleagues in my reserve unit that I talk to, I'll be going up this weekend to

my drill unit and have to explain my vote to my peers and friends, makes sense to them.

If you are a lieutenant and you're going out to the range to shoot, you have to have a full thing order for your colonel, your lieutenant colonel, who reads it over. He does what they call a confirmation brief. You explain what type of training exercise you're going to do, why you're going to do it and why you need the rounds you need.

He looks at it and says, you don't need that many rounds. He'll cut you off on that. It's a controlled item.

When you go to the Armory and check out your weapons, it's a controlled item. You sign for it. You got to the range and you do your shooting. When you get done from the range, we do what we call a line up. We frisk each other and we check all our gear. Pretty intrusive. Now we don't do this in any disciplinary manner. We do this to ensure that there's no spare rounds anywhere. Maybe you had a double feed and when you picked up the round you put it in your trousers. You didn't know it was there. Maybe it ended up in your gear by accident.

Because the Marine Corps views ammo as a controlled item, we don't want it to go anywhere. When I was in Quantico Basic Infantry School, we actually found a round because of negligence but not for any malice, in the dryer. Well, someone didn't get lined out right. The round was in the trousers probably and it was there.

It's a controlled item and it doesn't make sense for me that it wouldn't be a controlled item in the civilian sector.

So with that being said, I think we should definitely have background checks for ammo. When I was a junior officer in the Marine Corps, I'd have to stand duty, a lot of times in the weekends. I was a junior guy, and we would carry an M-9 pistol, a Baretta.

I'd go to the Armory, check out my weapon. They would count 30 rounds. I would count 30 rounds. I would sign for 30 rounds. I would load two 15-round magazines, not one 30-round magazine, and I would patrol.

Interestingly enough, depending where you're stationed, I wasn't able to carry my weapon at what you would call Condition One, which means I'd have my

magazine inserted, slide forward, no rounds in chamber. If I saw a threat, I could chamber that round, take it off safe and fire.

Today, you can have a pistol permit in Connecticut and you could have a round in chamber and carry it. I'm not saying we should do away with that. But what I'm saying is, there's actually sometimes more restrictions in the military than there is in the civilian sector.

When I was in Okinawa, you couldn't even have the magazine inserted, which I didn't agree with.

So when we look at all of this, there are, even for me a few things that I'm having a hard time swallowing to vote for this. The assault weapon ban is something that's very stringent. I looked at the nomenclature requirement. There definitely is. But it's something that I think we need to go forward with and I respect anyone's views here and anyone's vote and why they're voting for it.

I would just advocate for the fact that if you're voting no due to the assault weapon ban, I can understand that, but if you're voting no due to the ammunition requirement or to the magazine requirements, I think we need to move past that.

And we're at a point because of the horrific tragedy in Newtown where we're on the national stage with this one, and I think regardless of your vote tonight, and I respect anyone's vote tonight, I think all of us should come together to call for, no matter what your position is,

background checks for ammunition, limited capacity magazines.

Again, ammunition is a controlled item in the Marine Corps. It should also be a controlled item in civilian society.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, and not to indulge too long, there's a couple of other things in this bill that I particularly have an issue with, even though I'm still voting for it.

For instance, the requirement that you have to be over 21 to purchase a weapon bothers me. My cousin, who I lived with in the Marine Corps, he's a marine sergeant is currently at Edson Range and he trains marine recruits from Camp Pendleton, 18-year-old men and women to shoot with the M-16 A-2 service rifle.

I think, you know, moving forward we should look back at that requirement. Maybe next year say, you know what? Maybe that wasn't the best idea. We

should have 18, 19-year-olds being able to purchase weapons and have them, especially if they have that military training, and we do have those individuals in Connecticut, even in the Marine Corps, we have I and I marines who are active duty marines stationed in Plainville, Connecticut, so it does affect them.

Also, I do have issue with the fact that we are having a restriction for 10 round magazines or pistols, Mr. Speaker. I think it was horrific what happened with the Gabby Gifford shooting. However, there are pistols that are made for different ammunition magazines. The M-9 is a 15 round mag. The Block 40, the 12 round mag.

And the idea is, if you have less stopping power with your pistol, you should have more rounds and I think we should look at this. Make a requirement that the pistol eventually is flush with the magazine well.

Talking to some of my colleagues tonight, they bring up a good point that maybe the gun manufacturers will get around that. I think that's hard. If you mandate that the actual pistol stays at the same dimensions they are now, and you mandate that it can only be the same magazine that was factory authorized originally, I don't see them getting around that.

I mean, the bullet is only a certain size. You can't fit enough into that space. That's just simple kind of physical aspects of the weapon.

Also, just real quickly, you know, when it comes to actual weapon registration, you know, my assault weapon and my pistol is registered in the Marine Corps. Here are my Armory cards for my reserve unit. They're registered. I can't take it out unless I have a reason. They're actually serialized. I have them on here. When I check it out I have to return that weapon, the same serial number.

Accountability is very important in the Marine Corps. As junior lieutenants in Quantico, we would do site counts every morning and night. Not only do you have to match up your weapon, the serial number has to match up. Our stuff is regulated for a reason, because accountability matters. You don't want these weapons getting into the wrong hands. You don't want the wrong people to get these weapons.

As an aside, if you have some mental issue and you're diagnosed by a corpsman and medical doctor, you're taken off live fire. You can't shoot. So these are common sense regulations that operate in the

military world that I think should now be obviously operated in the civilian world.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, in closing, you know, the Second Amendment is not an absolute right. You don't have the right to have a 240 belt fed machine gun in civilian sector. You don't have the right for a Mark 19 grade A launcher. You don't have the right for a 50 cal. They're very fun to shoot. They are great weapon systems, but there's a time and place for them.

Likewise, with the regulations I think we're imposing tonight, there's a time and place for them. I think this is the right bill, Mr. Speaker.

There are some things I question. There's some things that are hard for me to swallow on this one, but at the end of the day I think it's the right thing to do. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate it.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Adinolfi of the 103rd.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I'd like to say in my sorrows to the people in Newtown that suffered. We had not as big an event but in Cheshire we had the Petit murders. They were my neighbors, so

I know how they feel. I had a nephew that was bludgeoned to death at 23 years old, so again, I say I know how those people from Newtown feel and their sorrows.

I have family in Newtown but luckily, my niece is there and had already finished school.

One of the things that I've been concerned about with all the discussion we've had tonight, and throughout the evening, even upstairs in the Senate, we only addressed assault, but nowhere have we addressed self defense, and I'll give you some ideas on that.

I was taught through police officers in my family, how to defend myself in case an invader or an intruder or a burglar tried to break into my house and I had the warning.

Well, the first thing I was told is to make sure I had a magazine with plenty of bullets, and in there the first thing you put in is some blanks. And the idea is, if you hear somebody breaking in the house and you shoot those three or four blanks, 999 times out of 1,000, if they don't have a weapon, they'll run out.

H – 1153

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But what happens if two people come into your home with assault weapons, and you only have a 10 round magazine. What do you do? You fire the three blanks and you've got seven left. You're dead.

And that's what this bill does. This bill is going to murder people in the future.

Right after the Newtown incident in Westchester, New York, there was published through the Freedom of Information Act, all the gun owners in many of the counties in Westchester County and in New York, so my concern now is through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proper proponent of the bill, is there anywhere in this bill that would guarantee that the list of rifle or magazine owners that have to register their weapons as proposed in this legislation that will guarantee that the list will not be made public?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I'm sorry, Representative Adinolfi. To whom were you directing your question?

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

I don't know who the proper one is out there, so I'm asking you because you have about eight.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I believe, Representative Adinolfi that Representative Dargan has volunteered to answer your question.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker and thank you, Representative Dargan.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, that is presently in the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

It is in the bill? Thank you. I'm happy.

The other question I have is, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proponent of the bill, how were the 10 round limits determined? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I'm not clear on the specific question. How will a 10 round magazine be determined?

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Yes, what did you use to come up --

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Adinolfi, just one second. You're asking for a clarification. Representative Dargan, are you asking for a clarification for the phrasing of a question?

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, although I was not privy to the negotiations with the leadership, the Majority Leader, your Minority Leader, the Speaker, the leaders upstairs, I've been told that this came out of that working group. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Thank you. I don't agree with the decision, but thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proponent of the bill, how would this bill prevent any situation like the Petit murders or the Newtown tragedy from happening again, especially when law-abiding citizens are not allowed to determine what they need to defend themselves and family?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Is that a question, Representative Adinolfi?

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Yes.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, in all honesty I cannot see the future and see any future tragedies or in the position of saying that there will not be any future tragedies.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Adinolfi.

REP. ADINOLFI (103rd):

Thank you for the answer, Representative Dargan.

Mr. Speaker, a rifle or a pistol was not used in the Petit murders. I prefer not to go into the details. We all know what happened.

In the Newtown incident, what was to stop Lanza, God forbid, throwing a homemade bomb into a classroom? All the laws we pass will not stop a deranged

individual from committing murders. My 23-year-old nephew was bludgeoned to death with a sledge hammer.

The ban on any magazines over 10 brings to my mind an incident that occurred in Georgia a few months ago. A mother heard someone breaking into her home. She called her husband. He immediately called 9-1-1 and at the same time told her to take the twins, six-year-old twins and go up to the closet in the attic.

Well, that's exactly what she did. A few seconds later, an intruder opened the door to the closet. She emptied out her pistol. She hit him five times, but she did not take him down. He got away. Yes, he was caught later.

My question to the supporters of this bill, what would have happened to her and her twins if there was another burglar in the house and he had a weapon? They probably wouldn't be here today.

This has me very concerned. The Governor and the President said that if this type of legislation saves one life, it's all worth it.

I contend that this legislation will cost lives because it takes away the law-abiding citizen's ability to defend themselves as they see fit. I

certainly don't want these future murderers on my conscience.

Although I support most of the bill, I cannot vote for anything that will promote more violence and take away my Second Amendment rights. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Candelaria.

REP. CANDELARIA (95th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, in this late hour, I want to take the opportunity to address the Chamber and provide some comments in different perspectives.

I want to thank leadership for their hard work in putting together a comprehensive bill that addresses many topics.

This bill would definitely have an impact on situations like the terrible situation that happened in Newtown. But I still share some concerns, and those concerns are that this bill does not address the great issue of our urban cities.

Let's look at New Haven for example. Today, a specific young man who was killed in the Fair Haven part of my district. This is a situation that we see

every day in our urban cities. It took a terrible incident in Newtown for this Legislature to react.

Yet, we're seeing blood in the streets of our neighborhoods and this issue was never addressed. And yet, we're still here debating in the late hours, talking about this bill, the good pieces about it, the parts that we disagree with, but yet we forget to address the issue of urban cities and how are we going to stop the murders in our neighborhoods. That's the conversation that we need to have.

It is my hope that this conversation does not end with this bill today. There's other bills within the committee process. There are good bills, have good intentions, and hopefully we'll debate those at the floor later on during the Session.

There are several good parts about the bill. We address the issue and allocate an appropriation to the Statewide Gun Trafficking Task Force. Now there is an appropriation attached to it. Now they'll have the resources to really attack the grass root problem that we face from those traffickers that are coming from out of the state, bringing these guns into our neighborhood and distributing them.

We are talking about the assault and banned weapons and other stuff, but our neighborhoods are concerned with are the hand guns, the pistols. Those are the ones that we see that are implicated in gun violence every day.

There's another issue that we haven't addressed in this particular bill. We haven't addressed the issue of prevention. How do we take these teenagers that are exposed to this environment in our urban cities and how do we address the issue of mental health, because there was an issue of mental health specifically when we're talking about the exposure of violence in our urban cities to these teens. We need to address that issue as well.

We need to appropriate funding to ensure that we have a comprehensive program to address these prevention issues in our neighborhoods. We need to engage our youth within that conversation.

The bill addresses the issue of mental health but there's a lot of work more to be done. I know that in the Children's Committee, Representative Urban has been working very hard to ensure that we get bills to address this issue of mental health, and I thank you for that work.

But yet, we cannot stop there. It is unfortunate that we're here today addressing this particular issue, yet we haven't addressed the issue of our urban cities.

I urge my leaders to really take the opportunity after we pass this bill tonight, and have a real dialogue with Legislators from urban cities to really come up with strategies that can address the issue of our youth violence.

To address the issue of how can we incorporate a children's mental health plan within our school-based health clinics and our federally qualified health clinics so that they're working together collaboratively to ensure that when there are specific red flags, those red flags can be addressed right away and not have this child continue to get educated without addressing what can be a preventive measure in the areas of mental health.

This bill addresses many good things, but there is still a lot of work to be done. So I'm going to support the bill today and a lot of my colleagues I urge to support the bill, but the conversation definitely cannot end here tonight. We need to continue to do the work. We need to remember that

there's a need in our urban cities that we need to address. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Ackert of the 8th District.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is an important day and there's a lot of passion in this room today to do something, to make a positive impact and in some way make a difference that will stop future horrific days like we had on December 14th.

I was also honored to be on one of the Task Force, and that was in the school safety, chaired by the good Representative Fleischmann and Senator Boucher, and they did a wonderful job in working collaboratively and bipartisanly to come up with measures that we all could agree with, that we all can say that we can make some measures here that we do believe can make a difference.

Some of those measures actually were in place years ago in terms of some funding, '06 and '07 for school safety, and as was mentioned earlier by the good Chairman, that that stopped being funded.

We also, part of the school safety portion of this, had mandates that schools had to have a safety audit done and enact those. This strengthens that and makes sure that the audit is collaborative with local police and also with the State Department of Education, a move that will keep track of it.

The areas that I have some questions on though, and I'd like to pose those to the good Representative and I imagine Representative Fox. I didn't see Representative Dargan there, and it deals with Lines 27 on that section.

Essentially, it says, no person, I can see the portion that says firm or corporation, through you, Mr. Speaker.

If an individual sells a firearm, if that person sells a firearm, do they need to keep a record for 20 years of the purchase of that firearm, if they sell it individually, part of the change where if you have to do a background check to sell like you do a pistol, that you also now have to do that with a long gun. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

I could pose that again.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

No, I have it. I think that person is defined in the statute. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you. I thought it was. Thank you to the good gentleman on that, because I was curious if it was an individual, if there was going to be, if they didn't keep a record and obviously if it's a business they would keep record until out of business, so thank you to that.

Also, through you, Mr. Speaker, if I can purchase out of state and transfer ammo to the state as was asked earlier by Representative Miner, can I also do that with a long gun? Can I purchase a long gun out of state without a certificate and then bring that home if I'm out in the mid-west or up north or down south, transfer that in and have that as ownership without having a certificate or any other record? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The answer would be yes if you're eligible to have that gun within the state through one of the certificates. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

And thank you, Mr. Speaker. One of the things that we did learn meeting with the Department of Emergency Preparedness was that the NIKS system is used stringently in some states like Connecticut and not so stringently in states throughout the nation, so it gives, it brings, you know, a concern in that case.

Reverse of that, if I was in Massachusetts and did not have Connecticut hunting license, permit license for pistol in Connecticut nor a certificate to purchase ammunition, could I buy ammunition in Connecticut at one of our retailers, a resident of out of state?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, I would say that answer would be no, because you would not have a certificate within our state in order to buy ammunition at that time.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the good gentleman.

I do have some questions that would be referred to, on the mental health piece. A good portion was brought up, and I would like, if I could through you, Mr. Speaker, pose a question regarding the mental health portion of the bill.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

If I may, sir, is your question with regard to the mental health programs or with regard to the insurance provisions.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, the programs. On the specific Melissa's Project, in specific and that portion.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Then I believe Representative Wood is your person. Please frame your question, sir.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you to Representative Wood. In the passion that you had working on this collaboratively with Representative Megna and that whole commission came through with some very, very good pieces.

I introduced a piece of legislation that would have helped families of adult children like the gentleman that posed the horrific incident in Newtown, and that was pushed back with some HIPAA regulations and that those in the families could not be involved with the care of the adult children to help monitor them and help with their medication, and this was derived, unfortunately, two families I worked with last year prior to December, could not get the care that they desired to help with their adult children over the age of 18 that when not on their specific medication or into their treatment, they were no different in some manners and could have caused harm to them and others, and their parents wanted to do something about it.

In any way does this bill help families be involved in the care of their adult children, and you mentioned the Melissa's Project that may help them, keep them on task and help with their care so they may not impose harm on themselves and/or others. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Wood.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Thank you. I believe the answer to that is, this expands Melissa's Project, which is currently in existence. The family you referenced should be able to access this program right now. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and thank you to the good lady. Because they have felt nothing but resistance in that area, and I was hoping that there was an avenue here that like them and others, were able to in some way help with their care.

It was good to hear about the Melissa's Project so I referred that, some of those issues, and I thank the good lady for her answers.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Just a clarification.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Wood.

REP. WOOD (141st):

Sorry. Through you, Mr. Speaker, Melissa's Project right now is operating in the Naugatuck Valley and I know they're looking to expand it, so perhaps your constituent and friend would be able to access it, this program when it's expanded, but it's been a very successful program.

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Ackert.

REP. ACKERT (8th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I did note a number was a relatively small number that it can be expanded to, under 100, if I'm not mistaken, but I think that anything that we can do help with these families would be a plus and I thank the good lady for her answers.

I think that part of this piece is that we need to look at school climate. We need to look at the mental health piece of what's taking place here in the State of Connecticut.

We've heard about how we've changed how we handle some of these areas, but I think that it's not just when they get to be an adult, but when they are children and identification is an area that we really need to look at and make sure that those are being cared for.

We always hear the term, see something, say something, and sometimes we're afraid to say something. Well, maybe we might change that a little bit and start to say something, and that we look at these young individuals in their infancy and start to help with the care of them and start to get the help that they need.

I'm just going to wrap this up and touch on, part of the reason why I'm not in support of this legislation as a whole.

We had an opportunity to take it in pieces and that failed.

We had an opportunity just recently to take it and what was looked to be the complete bipartisan

consensus under the Rep. Miner's piece, and I think that was a very good move. I didn't like that in its whole, but it was more of a consensus, which I thought the idea of this was to move forward.

But I can refer to four constituents that I've heard from recently. One, unfortunately, an educator, retired educator, gun trainer, that saw me this morning when I was leaving the coffee shop in my neighborhood and said, so Tim, you're going to make me a felon today. And that struck me, because he's not registering his pieces. He said, you're going to make me a felon today.

Another was a retired gentleman sitting in the coffee shop that said, Tim, I've never owned a firearm, never will own a firearm, but you can't support this legislation. He said, I don't know what we're doing in Hartford there and he kind of was upset with me because I'm, you know, here working as a Legislature, not as a Legislator.

Another was a disabled Iraqi veteran, Afghanistan veteran, whose one arm is incapable of reloading a pistol and he has all the tactical training similar to probably Representative Alexander here, who is well spoken for a freshman, by the way. And said to me,

Tim, I have to protect my family, just like a police officer and the military has to protect those they're in charge to protect. Why am I limited in how I can protect my family, when I was overseas protecting yours?

And then to the woman, a resident constituent of mine who last year lost her six-year-old daughter to a gun accident and said additional regulations won't change what happened and you'll make law-abiding gun owners, like her family is, essentially a victim, another victim of Newtown.

An evil crept into our state last December 14th, and we have been working diligently under the leadership of this Legislature under Brendan Sharkey and Representative Aresimowicz and all the others, Representative Cafero, and will continue to work not just now, not just today, but in the future. I don't think that all these pieces will get what we want done and I think it will negatively impact those law-abiding people that are in my district and in yours and make them a part of the victim of what took place last December 14th. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Urban of the 43rd. You have the floor, madam.

REP. URBAN (43rd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, today happens to be in a twist of fate, my son's birthday. He is 31 years old today. That means that I have had 25 more years with my wonderful son than those parents had with their children in Newtown. I think of that every day. I think of putting him on the bus to go to North Stonington Elementary School when he was six years old and seeing his little face filled with the joy of the day that was to come, and I think of being one of those parents and being informed that my child was not coming home, and not only was my child not coming home, but the child that would come back to me would be filled with bullets and parts of their bodies detached and in horrible, horrible condition.

When this happened, it was almost impossible for me to think about this from a policy perspective. All I could think about it is from that perspective of a mom. So I had to step back, Mr. Speaker, and use my training as an economist and say, what can we actually do here?

And as an economist, we look at these types of problems and say, can we make our children and our families safer at the margin? And what I mean by that is, we require that you wear seat belts. We don't take your car away from you and the seat belt doesn't stop you from crashing, but it does, in fact, at the margin, make you safer.

We also have our children wear bicycle helmets. It doesn't mean that they can't go careening around and smash into things and do horrible jumping exercises, and it doesn't stop them from doing that. But it does, when they inevitably smash into something, make them safer at the margin.

I believe that what we are doing here tonight has clearly shown that at the margin, whether it be the gun control, whether it be the mental health, or whether it be the school construction, that we are making our children and our families, safer.

I know that there are law-abiding hunters and sportsmen enthusiasts in my district that are going to have to go the extra mile to comply with this, but you know what? It's worth it, to increase the margin of safety for our families and our children.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam. Representative Srinivasan of the 31st.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker. I'm glad I'm not wishing you a good morning yet.

I, too, want to join everybody in thanking the leaders for all the hard work they have done in the past few months. It has been a privilege for me to work on the Mental Health Task Force under the able leadership of Senator Harp and Representative Wood here.

We have, Mr. Chairman, among the toughest gun laws in our country and if this were to become a law soon, we definitely will have the toughest gun laws in this country.

Having gun laws on the books is one thing, but making sure that we implement them and making sure that they're effective is what we need to do and unfortunately, that is a different story altogether.

I'm very thankful that we have decided to put in a million dollars into the Firearms Trafficking Task Force. In fact, just a few days ago, or a week ago, I was there giving testimony on Senate Bill 307

requesting the same, and I'm glad to see it happened here.

But my question, through you, Mr. Speaker, to the proponents of the gun violence prevention is, if history, we have seen what history is, and that has not boded well for us with either prohibition as we heard earlier in the evening, or with wrapping our hands around drug control.

So my question to you, through you, Mr. Speaker, is what controls do we have, what plans do we have when we know when these laws become effective? Unfortunately, the reality is gun trafficking will escalate, and that will become a harsh reality of our society.

So in preparation so that we implement appropriately, what measures do we have to make sure that our gun trafficking does not escalate and we don't see the same fate as either prohibition or drug control?

Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I believe, sir, that that question is appropriately directed to Representative Dargan. Representative Dargan, do you care to reply?

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Through you, I know that the gun trafficking has worked in the past when we funded it. Now there's a million dollars that's put forth for this and I think I could say with assurance that it has worked in the past within our inner cities.

There's been plenty of examples that we could put forth, shows that it's worked either through our state agencies or our local agencies and even with our federal agencies, and this has been something that a number of people from all different sides of the issue, including members of the sportsmen's group who have been looking to fund this over the years.

And there's been instances when it was implemented that it has worked and I'm assured that it will work in the future. Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Srinivasan.

REP. SRINIVASAN (31st):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to bring that point up and get the reassurance that what has worked in the past hopefully will work for us, given

the fact that the trafficking could escalate, unfortunately.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Rovero of the 51st. You have the floor, sir.

REP. ROVERO (51st):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good evening, sir.

REP. ROVERTO (51st):

I'd like to tell you a couple life experiences and the reason I'm going to vote the way I am. As a former first responder, I know about horrific incidents. I know what it feels like a father, like as a father, who hears his daughter scream in the middle of the night because a rapist is in her bedroom.

I know what it's like to grab your rifle and shoot at this intruder.

I know what the responsibilities are for a permit holder to carry a pistol or revolver.

I believe Senate Bill 1160 is a bill of such importance and with the fact that there are so many

unanswered questions, that it deserves a public hearing.

If I thought for a minute this bill would save one life, I would vote for it in a minute, but I do not believe it's going to accomplish that. I believe that the only thing this bill is going to accomplish is to punish the law-abiding gun owners.

I must say, I support some sections of this bill but as you know, it's either all or nothing. So for the above reasons, I will be voting no on this bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Sampson of the 80th District.

REP. SAMPSON (80th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me start by saying I'm not surprised, but I'm kind of disappointed that our Motion to Divide the Question failed earlier

because like a lot of people in this room, there are parts of the bill that I very much am in favor of, and then there are some other parts that I might disagree with, but I would have liked to have the opportunity at least to be able to show what I supported and what I did not.

Like everyone in this Chamber, I grieve for the families of those lost in Newtown and I am going to spend a large amount of time talking about the parts of this bill that I dislike and as a result, I don't want anyone to take that to diminish my sentiment in any way. It's just that I do not believe that some parts of this bill would necessarily make the world a safer place, or would have done anything to prevent that tragedy or any future tragedy.

Briefly, I believe that the consensus items that came out of the school security subcommittee and also the mental health subcommittees are worthy. I don't think we had a lot of time to delve into those matters as thoroughly as I would have liked to, and I think we could have come up with far better results had we actually had a little bit more time, but I do believe they are worthy of going forward and I do support them.

Do I think they're going to change the face of the world or even Connecticut? No, I don't think so. But I do think that they are a step in the right direction and I do support those ideas going forward.

There is a section in the bill that attempts to modify the risk reduction credit program, which we all

know as the early release program for violent felons and I applaud the effort there to make some changes to tighten up that program, but I'm going to elaborate on that a little bit more before I get to the end as well.

And that brings me to the part of the bill that I do have a problem with, and that is the numerous gun control proposals that are contained in one of the sections of the bill.

I don't oppose every item that is listed as far as gun control. My issue really comes down to the bans and restrictions and requirements for additional certification and fees that would be borne by law-abiding citizens who have done nothing wrong and don't deserve to have their world changed because of what happened on December 14th.

My test really for whether an idea in this bill or any particular piece of it is worthy, is whether or not it would have made any difference on December 14th, first of all, and failing that, would it do anything to potentially reduce acts of violence in the future in any other way.

And of course, anything that meets those two tests I would certainly support, as long as it does

not impact on the freedoms of law-abiding citizens. Unfortunately, I think there's many items that are contained in the underlying bill that do, indeed, fail that.

I have often said in this Chamber on lots of different issues, that I measure whether or not I can support a bill based on whether or not it is going to negatively impact any single individual, and I feel like there are quite a few single individuals that are going to be impacted by this proposed bill.

I want to make a side note here to anyone who is listening here or watching who is unconcerned about the impact to the many law-abiding gun owners in our state about what's going to happen in this legislation, and that is that we're going to meet many, many times in the future and we're going to pass many, many more laws, and I would consider that some day it might be something that is just as important to you as these issues are to those people that might be at stake.

Throughout our history, even the history of all mankind, many a wise man has made the observation that any trade off of freedom for safety is a foolish one. You can go on line and you can look up quote after

quote from our founding fathers talking about this exact issue, and I want to just bring one to your attention and it's something Daniel Webster said.

It is hardly too strong to say that the Constitution was made to guard the people against the dangers of good intentions.

Excuse me, Mr. Speaker. I understand the desire by many people in and out of this room to come up with just that sort of balance. My concern is that I think the bill before us is absolutely going to curtail those freedoms that I just mentioned, but not necessarily provide any additional safety.

Our job here in the Legislature is simply to make laws. That's what we do. Unfortunately, laws by themselves mean very little. Laws to be effective they need to be respected. They need to be obeyed. And finally, as my good colleague in front of me, Dr. Srinivasan just mentioned, they need to be enforced, and I want to talk about these three issues briefly.

To be respected, laws need to be fair and they need to be just. So what makes a law just as opposed to unjust? Well, an example of an unjust law would be one that unfairly targets a minority, but is applied

with the force of the majority, something that Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. talked about regularly.

For Americans, the Bill of Rights is a measure of what is just versus an unjust law. Its express purpose is to protect the rights of individuals, not just from the majority, but also from the good intentions that Daniel Webster spoke about.

This brings me into the Second Amendment. The Second Amendment is not a new idea. It existed long before our founding documents. Immediately preceding our Revolutionary War, there was a Virginia Declaration of Rights that contained the same language. Before that, there was an English Bill of Rights that included the same language and was designed to protect the members of Parliament from the monarch, the King of Britain at the time.

In Federalist 46, which was written by James Madison, one of our founders, and certainly a man who had a lot of input in our founding documents, our Constitution and our Bill of Rights, he speaks at great length at what the purpose of the Second Amendment is, and he talks about how Americans have huge advantages because their citizens are armed, both for our common defense and that we would be in a

position to preserve our own freedoms in the case of any tyranny.

Back in, I think early March, nearly 2,000 Connecticut citizens came to this Capitol to remind us of the importance of their Second Amendment rights and also to let us know that they didn't want to be subjects. Now, unfortunately, these people faced a very cold reception, and I mean that literally, because they were forced to stand outside for upwards of two hours in a snowstorm because they had to go through metal detectors, something that has never been done before or since, and something that just adds to what I've perceived some of the intentions of this bill, which is to provide a little additional stigma to law-abiding gun owners, that somehow, I'll get to that later.

When these folks came to testify, of course they testified about their concerns about their Second Amendment freedoms and they talked about our history, their concerns about gun registration, gun confiscation and everything else that they saw as a potential law that could come down from this Body, mostly because they did not have an actual bill to

review, but merely they were told that the subject matter was gun control.

But one of the things that they repeatedly said, and I found compelling because many colleagues and other people that I spoke to, found it amazing that people would come and actually say that people were upset because they thought their government was becoming too oppressive.

The Revolutionary War occurred precisely because of an oppressive government, namely, the British King. It began because the British intended to confiscate the arms of American colonists at Concord, Massachusetts. Does anyone here remember the shot heard around the world that we heard about in grade school? Well, that's what it was about. That was our forefathers using their arms to defend their own liberties against an unjust and oppressive government.

That war was won and we have the freedoms that we cherish today because they were armed and they could not be defeated by the most powerful army and navy the world had seen at that time.

So free citizens rebelling against an oppressive government and establishing a government of their own that protects those freedoms is, in fact, our legacy

and I don't think it's anything that should be mocked when people come to remind us of that.

So after the Revolutionary War, of course, our founders got together and they drafted the Constitution and they did this with all of these facts in mind. So it's no surprise that the Second Amendment shows up in the Bill of Rights, where it does, in fact, right after the First Amendment that guarantees our most basic freedoms of religion and speech. The Second Amendment is there to guard against and protect that list of freedoms in itself.

And it's also no surprise that the Second Amendment says, shall not be infringed. Do I have to remind anyone what the meaning of infringed is? I bet if I was to infringe upon your property or your ability to speak your mind in this room, I think you might come to remember what that means rather quickly.

The Second Amendment is critical to what makes us Americans. We went from being subjects to a King, to becoming kings of ourselves. We have the right to own property, to defend it if necessary and to choose our own paths in life, and the Second Amendment is vital to preserving these rights.

Since this all started, I wondered to myself whether or not the Connecticut General Assembly, us in this room and the Senate as well, even have the power to change either our Constitution or the Connecticut Constitution in the manner that we're going about it, or, I'm sorry, the U.S. Constitution. We all took an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution against those who would seek to abolish or alter it.

I think even the Connecticut Constitution would require something more than a vote, a mere majority vote in this Body, possibly a Constitutional Amendment.

For those that say the Second Amendment or Article I, Section 15 of our Connecticut Constitution is an outdated law, I want to remind them that we just ratified our State Constitution in 1965, hardly a very long time ago in societal terms and that we could have had a Constitutional Convention in Connecticut in just 2008 and of course it was voted down by the people of Connecticut.

Are we supposedly smarter than our founding fathers, or our colleagues in 1965, or the people of Connecticut just a few short years ago? I know that there's a lot of rumors about whether or not there

would be a legal challenge to this legislation and I am quite confident that there will be, and I hope that there is, and I think that there should be.

My good friend, Representative, I think it was Mikutel over there, brought up the Heller v. D.C. decision, which I'm not going to rehash. I have some notes on it. But he made the very, very important point that this has all been done before and in Heller they determined that weapons that are in common use cannot be banned, and I believe the legislation that we have before us seeks to ban many, many things that are in common use and would fail that test.

There's also a Supreme Court decision that says that gun control cannot be legislated for the purpose of suppressing gun ownership, only for the action of fighting crime, and I truly believe that the legislation before us does indeed have the desire of suppressing gun ownership.

I want to mention one other case and that's McDonald vs. Chicago and this is a case where the City of Chicago tried to deprive their citizens of their Second Amendment liberties and in the end they lost. They went to the Supreme Court and they lost, and they appealed and they lost again.

But what was interesting is that they had to pay damages to the tune of $1.4 million for their loss, so I would submit that we might, in fact, by putting forth this legislation be risking taxpayer dollars of the citizens of our state to defend it in court.

I'm going to move on to the second thing that I mentioned, which is that laws need to be obeyed. I'm sure everyone in this room has received countless e-mails with the term law-abiding citizens. I've heard it mentioned in here quite a few times. These are the people that I am here speaking on behalf of today.

There is something sinister about proposals that seem to imply that anyone who legally owns a gun is simply a criminal in waiting. I heard it said countless times, how the Sandy Hook killer was a perfectly good law-abiding citizen right up until he did what he did. A more ridiculous statement could not be uttered, except possibly that somehow these gun control laws are going to make our world safer.

I equate this to some maniac driving down the road at 100 miles an hour and we have this 25 mile an hour speed limit and the answer is to reduce the speed limit to 20 miles an hour.

These laws will only be obeyed by people who choose to obey them. That by definition is a law-abiding citizen. Criminals will still have their guns and their magazines and they will still commit their crimes unless of course we start doing some things that we should be doing, which I will get to before I am done here.

We are allegedly here to stop another mass murdered. The truth is that the Sandy Hook killer committed countless crimes on December 14th. He stole guns. He possessed a hand gun under age 21. Then he shot and killed his own mother. Then he transported loaded guns, brought these onto school property, I know, some of these are big, some of these are small, but then he forcibly broke into the school. He discharged his weapon within city limits and then he murdered 26 innocent people and finally committed suicide.

Do we really think that adding any more laws to our books would have stopped him?

Expanding bans on guns or magazines certainly will not. Let me talk about magazines for a second. To change a magazine in a hand gun or a rifle takes about two seconds, and I would bet that crazed maniacs

who plan on mass murder practice a lot, so they can do it a lot faster than that.

Even if you ban and confiscate every, what you call high capacity magazines, the criminals will still have them. They will make them. After all, it's just a plastic box with a spring in it. It's hardly a complicated thing, or they will buy them out of state or they will use fertilizer or they will use airplanes or any other thing that might have been used in any type of act of evil like this in the past, or they'll just use 10 round magazines.

And the reason why I bring that up is because the largest and single most deadly mass murder involving firearms occurred at Virginia Tech in 2007. The killer killed 32 people and wounded 17 others and he used a 22-caliber pistol with 10 round magazines, which is not banned under this proposed bill.

As I said, a magazine takes just a couple of seconds. It's not enough time to rush an attacker. At Virginia Tech, the victims were college kids. I mean, if there was ever a chance where people could rush an attacker and stop him, I think it would have been there.

The only result of limiting the size of magazines is that innocent law-abiding citizens will not have them. They will foolishly obey the law, and the only result of that is that the decent law-abiding father who is some day going to have to defend his family against attackers is going to be at a disadvantage. The criminal, or criminals as Representative Adinolfi pointed out, because you don't know what's going to happen, they certainly are going to have whatever armament they choose to have.

The sad truth is that this father is the first responder. I mean, there are many, many good law enforcement officers in our society, but they will tell you themselves that they typically show up after the incident is over.

Banning magazines is not going to prevent any future acts of violence of make someone stop being evil.

I want to talk about the assault weapons section for a second. What exactly does prohibiting the sale of a firearm that has an adjustable stock or a pistol grip or a barrel shroud or a flash hider accomplish? You noticed I didn't answer because everybody knows the answer is nothing.

It doesn't make the gun any more dangerous. These are purely cosmetic features. The federal assault weapons ban was in effect in for ten years, had almost no results. In fact, there are plenty of studies have shown that the violent crime rate actually went down when it ended.

Let me go back to something really quick. The fact is that as I said, these are just cosmetic features, but this reminded me of something, and that is that is that I get lots and lots of e-mails from people that tend to say that these semi-automatic assault weapons spray bullets. So let me just explain what semi-automatic is here for a second.

A semi-automatic weapon is one that fires one bullet at a time. You have to pull the trigger every time to make it fire, and it bugs me when I get these e-mails from people saying that these guns spray bullets, because I believe they're being purposely misinformed. They are being hoodwinked into thinking that we are banning machine guns and the fact is that machine guns have been banned for a long, long time.

Basically all guns are semi-automatic. I mean, there might be some exceptions but virtually every gun

any one of us have ever seen or run into is a semi-automatic firearm.

The AR-15 itself, I think the issue there, or the Bushmaster, the issue there is that it looks scary, but I want to tell you it functions just like granddad's gun that was hanging over his mantle or his fireplace. The only difference is how it looks. It's a modern rifle.

I mean, if you go back to the fifties, cars had chrome bumpers and fins, you know. They don't have that any more. Today cars are rounded, sleek and they have body color bumpers and much like that, technology has advanced in the firearms industry, too, and they use plastic parts because if you're going hunting and you're going to carry around a wooden rifle all day, it's heavy.

But the fact is, like I said, cosmetic issues only. These types of rifles are owned by decent law-abiding citizens, all across our country, and there are, I don't know how many, hundreds of thousands of them probably in our state. They are used for shooting targets, other types of shooting sports, hunting, high school students who shoot targets and

belong to leagues, even teenage boys and girls who represent us in the Olympics. Guns are just tools.

I bet you a lot of you guys have seen, you know, studies that show that more murders have been committed with hammers than assault weapons, so I wonder why we're not banning hammers.

I started talking about how laws need to be just and that they need to be obeyed and that they finally need to be enforced. So why aren't we enforcing the laws that we do have?

Since before December 14th, there are many of us who have been clamoring for more law and order. In fact, I would submit that the best part of this entire bill are the changes made to restore some sense of sanity by getting rid of parts of the early release program, because I believe this might actually stop some crime.

Banning rifles of any type makes no sense. Rifles are not just typically used in violent crime or murder. In fact, I have had people tell me that you are more likely to be struck by lightning than to get shot by a rifle in Connecticut.

And as a matter of fact, I looked up the FBI's statistics to figure that out for myself and it turns

out that in the 10-year period between 2001 and 2011, there were four murders committed with a rifle in Connecticut. Four.

What's interesting though is that there were 64 murders committed by people with no weapon at all. Maybe we should ban hands.

Banning magazines is just as fruitless. There are millions of them in existence. They have no serial numbers and I said they are just very, very simply made and designed. It's just a plastic box with a spring.

The technology exists to make them on a 3-D printer in minutes. And the bottom line is that criminals are not going to turn them in. Are we going to send police to the homes of otherwise law-abiding citizens to confiscate these magazines?

I want to finish by talking about what we should be doing.

We should be concentrating on making our schools more secure.

We should be working on how we treat mental illness. We should be repealing the early release program.

We should be restoring the death penalty.

And we should be enforcing our existing laws.

There are quite a few OLR reports that came out over the past month and I really wish that I'd had the time to have put them together because I will tell you that even a quick glance will tell you the whole story that we do not enforce our existing laws. There are repeat criminals on the street committing crimes of violence every day and we are not putting them in prison.

Why are we not concentrating on protecting our criminals, our citizens from criminals, rather? We're supposedly here discussing this legislation because of the events in Newtown. The problem is, it has little to do with laws or our ability or desire to protect anyone in our society. We all have that.

We are here today because of the axe of an evil person. It's not about an evil gun, or even an unsafe school. I really don't even know that you can stop an evil person.

You think prior to 9-1-1, no one would ever have considered that you could have used a commercial airplane as a missile, and I think prior to the Oklahoma City bombing, no one would have thought that

you could buy fertilizer and use that to blow up a federal building.

Of course, none of this means that we shouldn't try to make the world safer. We should absolutely try to make the world more safe for our citizens. The problem is that the gun control measures that are contained in this bill just don't do that.

I keep hearing the term gun violence, but when you talk about gun violence, ask any person on the street and they will tell you that that means violence that happens in the cities by repeat criminals using hand guns, which is something that's like almost not addressed at all in any of this. And I maintain that's where our focus should be.

We should do our best to keep guns away from those that are potentially dangerous or don't have the proper faculties to safely handle a firearm. We should keep criminals in prison. I know I said it before. I want to keep saying it. I'll support those kinds of measures of they come before me but I am not going to support anything that is going to adversely impact law-abiding citizens in a negative way.

I am opposed to this bill, Mr. Speaker, not because I am not interested in the few good things it

does, but because I cannot support any effort to weaken our state or U.S. Constitutions in the name of achieving something this bill that will have little to no effect upon.

I'm not here defending guns. This debate, as I said, is not about guns or even about laws about guns. It is about freedom.

Someone once said that we only have the rights we are willing to fight for and I know that there are many thousands of law-abiding gun owners in this state who do not deserve to have their rights trampled because of the acts of some maniac and I stand by that.

So, Mr. Speaker, with all of this in mind, I have an Amendment. It is LCO 5456. I would ask that you call it and give me leave to summarize.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Will the Clerk please call LCO Number 5456. The Representative has asked leave of the Chamber to summarize. This will be designated House Amendment "B".

THE CLERK:

House Amendment "B", Senate Bill 1160, LCO 5456 offered by Representative Sampson and Senator Markley.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The gentlemen has asked leave of the Chamber to summarize. You have the floor, sir.

REP. SAMPSON (80th):

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Forgive me, I'm a little parched, so if you folks will bear with me for just a second.

This particular Amendment contains much of the underlying bill. As I said from the outset, I am in favor of a great many parts that are in the underlying bill, including the parts that surround the mental health subcommittee recommendations and the school security subcommittee recommendations.

The one change that I have made to either one of those sections is that within the school security language, there is a provision in there to increase the amount of the grants available in the school security infrastructure competitive grant program, and that's going from $3 million to $15 million, and that's in the underlying bill. I'm not changing that in any way, shape or form.

The other change that happens is that the list of items that are eligible to apply for the grant for is being increased as well.

But I found one omission there that I thought needed to be corrected, and that is school resource officers, so my Amendment, this Amendment includes the provision to make school resource officers part of that list of items that can be applied for by municipalities.

And Mr. Speaker, forgive me, but my colleague to my right just reminded me that I should move adoption, so I would like to do that.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Yes. The question before the Chamber is on adoption. Will you remark, sir? Will you remark, sir?

REP. SAMPSON (80th):

Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. As I continue on, so that takes care of the mental health part and also the school security part.

With regard to early release, now I have only had a brief opportunity to review what is in the underlying bill as far as the early release program goes, but my concern is that we're not going far enough. I have real problems with the entire risk reduction credits program as it is. I think that it has been administered poorly. There are reports that

people are getting credit for good time for merely applying for classes that they never serve in and so forth.

And I feel much more comfortable with the entire program being eliminated, and as such, I have included that provision in my Amendment.

So my Amendment includes the provision to remove and eliminate the risk reduction credit early release program in its entirety.

Finally, I have made significant changes to the gun control subcommittee section, and essentially what I've done is, I've removed anything that I feel is inappropriate based on the impact it's going to have on law-abiding citizens.

It still contains many good provisions, and the ones that I think actually do something with regard to Sandy Hook. There is a prohibition on people listing anything other than their home residence on their pistol permit application.

There are stricter mental health look backs.

The statewide deadly weapon offender registry is still incorporated in this language.

The language to expand safe storage and require that people that have a background of mental illness are included is also there.

The increased penalties for firearms trafficking and straw purchases is included.

And we've also added the re-establishment of the statewide Firearms Trafficking Task Force, which has been alluded to by some of my colleagues numerous times and I believe that that is also something that has been successful in the past and would actually make an impact on keeping criminals and reducing quote unquote, gun violence.

And finally, I included a credit if you purchase a gun safe, much like the tax credit that you would fill out on your state tax return for your home or your automobile, you can now write off the purchase of a gun safe, too, which I think would be a good thing to encourage folks to do just that. So that's what's in it.

What's not in it are bans on certain types of firearms based on their arbitrary cosmetic features.

There are no bans on ammunition magazines and there are no additional fees, licenses or certificates for anything, to buy ammunition or otherwise, and

there is no requirement to register something you already own.

What it does not do is, it does not make criminals out of law-abiding citizens. And with that, I would urge the Speaker to, can I get a Roll Call Vote, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

I'm not sure. The question before the Chamber is on a Roll Call Vote. All those in favor please signify by saying Aye.

REPRESENTATIVES:

Aye.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

In the opinion of the Chair, the 20 percent threshold has been met. When the vote is taken, it will be taken by Roll.

Is there again, as was the case previously, there are many folks on the board to speak on the underlying bill. If there is anyone on the board who would like to speak on this Amendment, I would ask that you stand to be recognized. Is there anyone who wishes to speak on the Amendment? Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm trying to go through this Amendment and I may have a question, because as I understand it, in order to get a eligibility certificate or a gun permit an individual has to show certain things. One is, they've not been convicted of a felony or other underlying misdemeanors.

They've not been convicted as a delinquent for a serious juvenile offense. They've not been discharged from custody within the last 20 years, after having been found not guilty by reason of insanity, and then there's also under, the current law says that if you've been involuntarily committed for any time within the preceding 12 months, you also would not be eligible and what the bill does is, it extends that period to 60 months.

And what this Amendment seems to do is, it includes a provision that says the commitment period must be 30 or more consecutive days.

If I may, if I can ask the proponent of the Amendment, what's the purpose of that language? I'm looking at, it's Line 137, 137. It also shows up in 167, 168.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Sampson.

REP. SAMPSON (80th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and through you, it is my understanding that the language that you're referring to, Representative, is exactly the same as the underlying bill. It was not my intention to change it in the drafting of this Amendment, either.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Well, it's underlined, so that would make me think it's a change and I'm pretty sure it's not in the underlying bill.

Is there a reason why, I guess maybe I can ask through you, Mr. Speaker, so is the response that you don't really have a reason for that specific provision. It wasn't something you were looking to change or not change?

DEPUTY SPEAKER RITTER:

Representative Sampson.

REP. SAMPRON (80th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker. As I said, this particular language was intended to be exactly the same as was in the underlying bill and the five-year look back is included. You can find it on Line 35.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th)):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Yes, I do understand the five-year look back is there and my concern, and you're correct. It's also on Lines 35 and 36.

But the 30 or more consecutive days provision, my concern there would be somebody could literally have four 28-day involuntary commitments over the course of the same year and they would still be eligible for either a certificate or a gun permit, so I do have a concern about that.

Also, I did raise objection to the previous Amendment. We did, we've had long discussion and long debate regarding the large capacity magazines as well as the assault weapons and I would urge my colleagues to vote against the Amendment because this Amendment here does eliminate those provisions.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Will you remark further on House Amendment "B"? Will you remark further on the Amendment before us? If not, staff and guests please come to the Well of the House. Members take your seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll. Will all Members report to the Chamber immediately.

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll on House Amendment "B".

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? Will Members please check the board to make sure your votes are properly cast. If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked and the Clerk will take a tally. The Clerk please announce the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill 1160, Amendment House "B".

Total Number Voting	149
Necessary for Adoption	75
Those voting Yea	29
Those voting Nay	120
Those absent and not voting	2

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

The Amendment fails. Representative Fleischmann of the 18th District. You have the floor, sir.

REP. FLEISCHMANN (18th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Folks in the Chamber already know that I am supportive of the measure before us and appreciative of all the work that our leaders have done to get us here.

I want to speak briefly in support of the Newtown families that so bravely took their unimaginable grief and turned it into activism and were disappointed with us earlier this week.

You know, compromise is never easy and this is a hard one and I understand that it is harder still for the parents and spouses and siblings and cousins and aunts and uncles and grandparents, neighbors, friends of the victims of the senseless violence that happened at Sandy Hook Elementary.

And what several family members said to me on Monday was that they couldn't believe that we hadn't managed to do an outright ban on large capacity magazines. Couldn't we just have an up down vote on that and I started looking into the issue more and I came across a couple of comments that totally affected me.

One was, quote, no honest man needs more than 10 rounds in any gun. And that didn't come from mayors against gun violence or the Brady Coalition. That

came from William Ruger, Sr., who founded Sterm Ruger, one of the world's top manufacturers of quality guns.

And then the other quote came from Bill Sherlock, who is the brave husband of Mary Sherlock, who was the beloved school psychologist at Sandy Hook, and his question was simple. What if the Sandy Hook shooter had been forced to reload not six times, but 15? Would more children, would our children be alive today?

I did some more research. I just went, I'm not someone who has particular expertise on guns. I have a friend who's an NRA instructor who's been in communication with me. I have constituents who know a lot. I don't know much. I went on line and I simply did a search for gun magazines and the first site I got to, I found a 30 round magazine from an AR-15 available for $49.99.

The second site listed, I found one for $26.99, so a point that was made to me by the families said, gee, these aren't that costly. I mean, it seemed like a fair point, so I started to have conversations with colleagues and I discovered two things.

Number one was that many in this Chamber feel the way those families feel. Within 30 minutes of making

calls, I had 14 co-sponsors for an Amendment that would have an outright ban of magazines that are more than, that would hold more than ten rounds. But I found something else too, which was that thought there were people who felt strongly about doing this, there were not enough votes to pass such an amendment in this Chamber. There were not enough votes to pass it in the Senate and it would cause an unraveling of the very hard work that you, Mr. Speaker, and Minority Leader Cafero, Majority Leader Aresimowicz and the leaders up in the Senate did to craft a compromise that could pass.

So given these facts, I am not going to call the amendment that does have a bunch of co-sponsors and would do what those families had asked because we're here to make laws, to do things that can pass both Chambers and go into effect.

I do think that their request is an understandable one, so for all those who feel like the bill we're considering today does not go as far as they'd like, and in particular those families that are still grieving, I just wanted to make sure that they understood that this General Assembly comes into Session every year, that we work each year to improve

upon what we've done in the year before, and that on this issue as with most issues we deal with, we will doubtless have more discussion, debate and action in the years to come.

So I guess in brief, I support this bill. We practice the art of the possible and I commend you, Mr. Speaker, and all those who have worked so hard on this bill in having developed something that we can pass, that the Governor can sign, that is possible.

And I look forward to working with those families to expanding the universe of possibilities in the years to come, and I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for your indulgence.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Smith of the 108th.

REP. SMITH (108th):

Good evening, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good evening, sir.

REP. SMITH (108th):

Thank you for the opportunity to speak. You know, I was just sitting here listening to this

dialogue all night and the first thing that came to my mind when my name was actually called was to say, wow.

For those of you who may feel like I do, I'm sure there are some who have very strong positions one way or the other, but myself, I'm very conflicted with this bill, have been for a while and I listened to the dialogue tonight and I'll tell you, it's a, and I don't have to say it, but it's a tough one.

We have three really important issues to decide tonight. They're incorporated into one bill, and I'd like to address those, but before I do, and I know we've all gone through this process, most of us who have spoken and thanked those who have worked so hard.

You know, you hear back in your districts, well, what the heck is going on in Hartford. What are you guys doing? Why don't we have a bill? And it's amazing to me, if the people only knew how much work went into, and the effort put into the Task Force by those Members who served, and I was not one of them. But I commend you all, whether you're in favor of the bill or against the bill, your work ethic, your dedication to the people of the state is commendable, so I thank you personally.

And some people have asked, you know, because we haven't acted so quickly, why we don't have a bill right now and listening to the dialogue tonight I'm wondering whether we are acting too quickly.

There are so many questions in my mind that have not been answered tonight, and nobody wants to delay a process just for the purposes of delay, and I also think we don't want to rush into a piece of legislation just for the pressure of getting something done.

So, but we're here and the bill is before us, and I'm sure we've all done our best to look through the 100 and some odd pages with the incredible amount of language that's in there, and I'm not going to go through the bill as I have in the past and dissect each paragraph and sentence and try to figure out what it says, so I know you're happy to hear that.

I want to talk about the school safety issue first, and I want to applaud that section of the school safety portion of this bill, which allows the school districts in each town to actually decide how they want to proceed in protecting their students and their staff.

What concerns me about this aspect of the bill, the school safety portion is, we're talking to the nation today, and someone mentioned earlier about, well, we don't think the entire nation is watching us, but trust me, I believe they are. I believe it expands outside the nation and how Connecticut can be a role model for the rest of the country for others to follow.

We've been called in today to vote on this Emergency Certified bill. I mean, you look up at the board. It's right there in bold red, Emergency Certification.

So I think what we're saying to the state, what we're saying to the country, what we're saying to our constituents is this bill dealing with mental health, school safety and gun violence is the top priority for the State of Connecticut. Number one.

But if you think about it, and if you look at the school safety provision, are we really making it the top priority? Part of this bill is, we have allocated $15 million for grants for our towns and our cities to compete against each other. Why are we not funding this? If we're making this our top priority, don't you think we should fund it? And I'm not talking

about pushing it back to the towns and municipalities and cities to fund it. I am talking about the State of Connecticut, which has called us in here for an Emergency Certification, to fund school safety for our children, for our staff, for anybody who works in those schools, and we're making this a competitive grant?

Who would have thought that Sandy Hook Elementary School would have been the object of such horrific carnage, slaughter, murder? Nobody.

How are we to decide which school district gets the first allocation of money and the next? And when I say we should fund this, I am not talking about raising taxes. That's the last thing we should do. But if we're making this a funding, then we make the funding a priority, too. So I do have a problem with that aspect of it and I hope going further, whether it's this year or next, the budget has been passed, as we all know. We haven't even talked about it. We can make this part of this deal.

Concerning the mental health issues, I'm also very pleased about the language in the bill that requires longer look backs. I think mental health is one of the issues that, although it's been addressed,

I'm not sure that it's addressed the way it could have been addressed.

We have not provided any type of requirement to our health care professionals, our health care providers to report those who are creating a dangerous condition to themselves or society.

Oh, I know we talked about doing a study, but if we're going to balance the rights of society against the rights of individuals as we have done with the gun portion, I think we need to do the same with the mental health aspect.

If somebody knows that an individual may cause damage or carnage or any type of injury to himself, herself, or anyone in society, there needs to be a duty to report. We have let that slip through the door and it needs to be addressed. We don't need to wait for a study. We need to address it now.

I must tell you the biggest concern I had with this bill and why I have been vacillating on it back and forth is, I am very much concerned about whether we are trampling on the rights of the Second Amendment of our Constitution.

There is no question. You've heard everyone talk about it. Our Constitution gives us the right to bear

arms and to defend ourselves. However, the United States Supreme Court in Miller and in Heller also indicated that the government has the right to make reasonable restrictions against the Second Amendment as it does for the First Amendment. Of course, therein lies the question.

Has this bill gone too far? I suspect that question will be decided by our Supreme Court. I believe it will. My personal analysis of the Heller and the Miller decisions are this. I think the bill will pass constitutional muster, and it took me a while to get to that point and I have the background, the training, et cetera but it wasn't so easy, and there's a lot of factors.

It's not just the commonality of the weapon as some have talked about, but the reasons why I think it passes the Constitution are a few reasons. It does not ban an entire class of weapons, which is what the Heller case talked about.

It does not confiscate the right of people who own weapons now to retain those weapons. To me, that would have been a deal breaker, but because those who have the weapons now can keep the weapons, and all

they have to do is register, while it's an inconvenience, it's a right they get to keep.

And because there have been other laws that have been passed a while back that have dealt with limiting the capacity of guns that have been upheld is another reason that tells me this bill, despite its many flaws, I think will survive any type of constitutional challenges.

So to my friends, to my constituents, to those who have fought on behalf of our country to uphold our Constitution and who have reached out to me and asked me to vote no, I want you to know I respect your decision. I respect your position. I respect your belief that this bill goes too far.

And I also respect your position that the legislation will not solve the problems of violence permeating our system, our country, but instead allows law-abiding citizens to further comply with more regulations. I respect all that.

And I also agree with you that there are severe questions here of how much effect this bill will actually have on deterring violence. Others have raised the same point. I hope it will, but I'm not convinced.

Here's the thing. We all know that evil exists in this society. It always will. It always has, and no matter what legislation we may pass tonight or any other day, it's not going to change.

The only thing that we can do, ladies and gentlemen, is to fight against it. But the violence and the evil, in my mind, will never stop. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't stop trying.

So because this bill in my mind passes constitutional muster, despite its flaws, and because it does not take away the weapons that you may possess already, and because the majority of my constituents asked me to vote in favor of this bill, I have agreed to do so.

So I will support it, and I just hope that we will address some of the issues and concerns that I've raised.

So, Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to speak on this very important subject.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Will you care to remark further? Will you care to remark? Representative Shaban, you have the floor, sir.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may, a question through you to the proponent of the bill and perhaps actually Representative Fox, because he's going to be the recipient, or it will probably land in his lap, if I may through you, ask him a question.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and through you. My question pertains generally to Sections 23 and 24 and in particular, the restriction on the large capacity magazines whereby in your home you can have what you want, or what your magazine works with.

At a shooting range you can use whatever your magazine works with, but on the transfer you're restricted to ten rounds in the magazine.

So through you, Madam Chair, the question I have is whether or not in the course of that transfer, and I'll propose a hypothetical to the good Representative.

Let's say I'm a law-abiding citizen. I have a hand gun. I have a carry permit, I have a permit to carry that weapon and I'm stopped on the street only because the officer happens to notice I'm carrying a

hand gun. Hello Mr. Shaban. Hello Officer. I see you're carrying a hand gun. Yes, I am. Do you have a permit for that? I present it. Yes, I do.

My question goes, what's next? Through you, Madam Speaker, can the officer then say, may I see your magazine to determine whether or not you've got ten rounds in the chamber, or not the chamber, in the magazine? Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and with respect to the question, it would be my opinion, and I don't think the law changes with respect to this bill is that if an individual who has a carry permit shows the officer their permit and is not doing anything else, then there's no reason for the officer to think that there's anything else going on, that would really be the end of the discussion between the officer and the individual.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Shaban.

REP. SHABAN (135th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker and I thank the gentleman. And that's really one of the many concerns I've heard from some of my constituents is whether or not this ban could be used as a pre-textural reason for an expanded search beyond that initial discussion, i.e., if there's nothing unlawful happening with the transfer of the weapon, i.e., I have a permit. It's properly carried and everything else, whether or not this new law would permit a search beyond that.

So for the purposes of legislative history and intent, I asked the question and I thank the gentleman for his response, because I think it's an important one in the context of this broader discussion.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, sir. Will you care to remark? Will you care to remark further? Representative Melissa Ziobron, you have the floor, madam.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, and how thrilled I am at the first time I get up to speak in the Chamber I have someone who knows how to pronounce my name. It's quite a surprise for me, so thank you for the opportunity.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I have a question to the proponent of this bill on the intent of the language contained in Lines 595 through 617, through you, Madam Speaker, to the proponent of the bill.

It does relate to the gun portion of the bill, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you. That's helpful. Representative Dargan. Please proceed.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you, but I haven't heard a question, yet, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

She's going to proceed now, Representative Dargan. Please proceed, Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Madam Chair. My question is this, Representative. Unlike in Sections 4, lines 316 to 326, which contain first class mailed renewal provision for long guns, I do not seem to be able to find the same provision for ammunition certificates in Section 15.

Does the mail renewal provision also exist for ammunition? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Through you, it's not in statute. Through you.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Confirming that it's not in the language of this bill, I see this as a significant problem.

You know, we've gone to the effort of making that provision for the new long gun certificate. We've gone through that provision in another area of the bill.

So my question to the proponent, through you, Madam Speaker is, why are not we having that provision for the people who are going to go through an ammunition certificate for the first time ever, so that they can be reminded of a renewal, like the other provisions in the bill? Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

I'm not totally clear what the question, through you, Madam Speaker, but I think that the certification would let them be eligible in order to buy ammunition, and that's one of three other ways that they would be certified in order to purchase ammunition. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. And if I may continue, I understand the intent of the new certificate, but I would pose the question to you, and through you, Madam Speaker, that we have made the effort to send a renewal first-class mail for long gun renewal, but we are not doing the same for people who have an ammunition certificate and it seems to me that it's not fair, certainly in the process of a first-time certificate need, and why aren't we doing the same for ammunition as we are in long guns?

Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. There would be nothing in that section that would prohibit someone from doing that. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. So am I to understand then that it was maybe an oversight on the compiling of this language that we specifically maintain a provision for a renewal to be made, and it clearly states in the section that I provided, that it will be mailed by first class for a renewal, but we are not doing it for ammunition and that this may have been an oversight, Madam Speaker, through you?

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Dargan.

REP. DARGAN (115th):

Through you, Madam Speaker. No, I don't think that it was an oversight. Through you, Madam Speaker.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Representative Ziobron.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th):

Thank you very much for the Representatives questions. That's one of the many issues I have with the bill in terms of fairness.

Madam Speaker, I'd like to continue to rise to speak to the subject matter of the bill, if I may.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Please proceed, madam.

REP. ZIOBRON (34th);

Thank you. I so appreciate the work that's been done on this bill by the leaders of Caucus, and especially my leader, Representative Larry Cafero. It must be stated that without his efforts, I truly believe as bad as I may think that this bill is, I know without his work it would be much, much worse.

And I struggle, because I don't think a lot of the sportsmen in my community are going to understand that this hard work led to a lot of good things in the bill and kept a lot of really bad things out.

But from my perspective as a freshman Legislator, it's deeply, deeply troubling to me to see the process that we're taking through Easter, and while it may be true that over the course of the last two months we've had 64 hours of public hearings, we have had not one

minute, not one minute of a public hearing on the specifics of this bill.

In fact, I couldn't even post a link to this bill until 8:00 a.m. this morning for my constituents to review. I was in the office last night until after midnight, reviewing, draffling, which, and again, I had to wait until 8:00 a.m. to review the final language of this bill.

It would have been a public service to my constituents and to our state residents for a public hearing to be held before voting tonight.

Earlier, my colleague, Democrat Representative Mikutel spoke at great length, and I couldn't agree more with his statements. My colleague Representative Miner spoke about his upbringing and my upbringing was a little different, but I ended up with the same respect and feelings about those who hold gun ownership so dear to them. In fact, I probably have a much different experience with guns than anybody in this Caucus.

I came to it, actually against guns when I met my husband, did not care for hunting. I've been married for almost 20 years now. I've cooked a lot of mean venison roasts in my time, and I appreciate the

sportsmanship, the heritage, that our sportsmen have in this state.

I'm very, very concerned about the added burdens that it puts on to them, how it tears at their heart that their Second Amendment rights are being trampled on.

There are many positive sections of this bill that I could support, but the overreaching issues that infringe on our Second Amendment prevent me from doing so. For example, I do not like the additional and unprecedented steps and certificates we are putting on lawful gun owners.

The felony components regarding the lack of unlawful registration, the addition of ammunition certificates, even when they have a hunting license. Even when someone has a hunting license they're going to have to get an ammunition certificate.

The expansions of guns that are now banned in Connecticut are unwieldy. I read the list this morning and I doubt very highly that anybody in this Caucus knows what every single gun is in that bill. I certainly don't.

Other items in the bill I find troubling is the lack of mandated reporting requirements for mental

health. We don't need a task force to put that in place. The bill the language uses to suggest that mental health aid for teacher training not be mandatory and only be a may situation, not just for our teachers but for our staff in our schools. Or other things that are stated in 4005 regarding the mental health first-aid that I have heard is so beneficial. If it's that beneficial, why aren't we mandating it in this bill?

But there are good things. For instance, requiring hospitals to cover expanded mental health diagnosis, expanded background checks, stiffer penalties for gun crimes and competitive school safety grants. But the good simply does not overshadow the bad.

In addition, the OLR report dated March 5, 2013 contains staggering statistics. This report is titled Case Statistics for Firearms Related Offenses. For example, Madam Chair, 82 percent, 82 percent, of crimes altering firearm identification marks, name or number were nolled. Eighty-two percent.

Eighty-four percent, through you, Madam Chair, were illegally transferred an assault weapon. We did

not prosecute 84 percent of the crimes in this report, and yet we're continuing to add gun laws to the tally.

We have other statistics. For instance, carrying a loaded firearm under the influence of drugs or alcohol. That's a pretty serious offense, don't you think? But we've nolled 86 percent of those crimes in Connecticut.

Second degree assault of an elderly, blind, disabled, pregnant or intellectually disabled person with a firearm, now that's unconscionable evil, and yet in Connecticut, we have nolled 74 percent of those crimes, 74 percent.

And many other crimes in that report are shocking because they actually have 100 percent nolles. And we're talking about raising additional laws, laws that we for whatever reason do not procedure currently in the State of Connecticut.

Considering the reality that we don't enforce those laws, I have to ask my colleagues how will making more laws make us safer. How does someone stop a planned attack that is unprecedented, someone who has studied other mass murderers, who kept a spreadsheet of targets, who committed at least five crimes in the process, who played violent video games

exclusively, and finally who would plot to murder innocent, beautiful children? Simply put, it won't.

It won't stop evil people from doing evil things or criminals from committing crimes. I ask you, while giving all due respect to Sandy Hook and the families there that have been so, so, tragic, as a mother myself of two children, I simply cannot support this bill and I ask you to join me in voting no this evening.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Thank you, madam. Will you care to remark further? Will you care to remark further? Representative Patricia Dillon, you have the floor, madam.

REP. DILLON (92nd):

Thank you, Madam Speaker and good morning.

DEPUTY SPEAKER ORANGE:

Oh, good morning.

REP. DILLON (92nd):

I'm rising in support of the bill. I want to thank those of you who worked on it. It seems to me that one of the important things about this bill is

that it represents a consensus of both the Senate and the House and both Democrats and Republicans.

And looking at what's happening in Washington, I couldn't be prouder of what the people have done that I serve with. I think it's astounding. And that means that there are things in this bill that I'm not thrilled with and there are some other things I'd like to see here that are not, but that's what happens. I don't really want to cherry pick anything.

I do want to single out a couple of things involving mental health. In particular, for example, many of the e-mails I've gotten have said, the important thing is to keep guns out of the hands of the wrong people. I couldn't agree more and I don't know how you can do that without a background check. I don't know how you find those people.

The second thing is, I'd really like to praise the work of Representative Wood and Senator Harp and Representative Wood's remarks tonight or yesterday. Yesterday, I participated in one of the conference calls with the individuals who are looking at building our capacity in behavioral health collaborations. It's really, really important to build that capacity because we know back before they

banned this kind of research at the CDC that if someone who was a witness to a violent crime is at greater risk for being a victim and a perpetrator.

And I know that in my own district, in one of my zip codes, maybe you'll respond to that kind of trauma by having nightmares. And in another zip code you might respond to being a witness by believing that you should own a gun yourself at nine, because that's how different, even within one city people can be.

So I think you've done an astounding job at building that kind of capacity and I want to praise the work that you did.

I think when people talk about mental health they really mean that they want to find the next Adam Lanza and I don't know that we can do that. Maybe we can, but it is true that many developmental issues do not have to become developmental problems and adverse events in childhood don't have to be dispositive. There is a way of providing some kind of support.

The children in one part of my district who have seen their own neighbors and childhood friends murdered on the street, have experienced trauma and I hope that they benefit from this bill, and I hope that what has happened at Newtown will also help us to

enlarge our sympathy so that we can understand what's happening to children in every part of our state. Thank you so much for the work that you've done and I'll be proud to be voting for this.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Representative. Representative Kupchik of the 132nd. You have the floor, madam.

REP. KUPCHIK (132nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I just wanted to reflect on some of the thoughts and things that I've been going through during the last several months, especially since December 14th.

Like most of us in this room we remember exactly where we were, we remember exactly how we felt when we heard that 20 beautiful small children lost their lives.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Madam, will you pause for just a moment. Will the Chamber please keep the conversations to a minimum or take them outside. You have the floor, madam.

REP. KUPCHIK (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Since that time, I have spent a great deal, like many of us in this room, learning and listening. We've read so much

information to understand more about guns, about mental health and about school safety.

As Legislators, it was our job to learn more about all of those things. I spent time at the gun safety course in our Department of Public Safety. I even went so far as to take a NRA gun safety course so that I could understand what legal gun owners go through and what they have to do to apply for a permit to carry a gun, and I will tell you that they have to learn quite a bit.

They have to sit through a long course about safety, about firearms. They have to shoot a firearm. They have to be fingerprinted. They have to have three separate checks, not checks, actually, money orders or certified checks before they can access a weapon and I think that's right. I think that's the right thing to do.

I think if you're going to use something like a firearm that you should have training and that you should go through a background check.

Through this process, I've listened to all the public hearings on mental health, school safety and on gun violence. What concerned me the most, I have to

say, is listening to the public hearings on mental health, all of it.

I watched a woman from Sandy Hook come and sit before the Committee. Her child didn't die that day, but she had a young child at the school and she also had a middle-school child who was in the middle school. And she talked about the fear and the angst about her trying to get to Sandy Hook to find out about her younger child.

But what was really revealing was how she talked about her middle-school child who had some issues, some serious issues, and this was his mother, she was a single mother raising these children and what she, in a raw way talked about was the difficulties she was experiencing with her middle-school child who was having some mental health issues.

She even rolled up her sleeve to show some bruises that she had from her middle-school child who had some problems. And I sat in the back of the room and I watched this woman pleading with this Legislature to help her.

And I thought, maybe that was Nancy Lambert looking for help and I thought, she's sitting here begging in this raw sense of a way for us to help her

and to tell you the truth, I'm looking at this bill and I don't think we're really helping her or anyone else who is going through dealing with a child who's really sick. Excuse me.

I've met with families in my district who are care givers and I've sat around their kitchen table in their homes and listened to what they go through, and it's not right. It's not right what we do and how we handle these families.

So we're going to attack guns and you know what? Some of the stuff we're doing is okay, and I've spent time talking to my pro-Second Amendment guy and you know what? After I talk to them, they say to me, you know what? I can deal with it. I can handle it because they're adults and they're responsible gun owners and they will follow the law.

So what are we doing to help the people who really need our help? What are we really doing? We're doing something, but frankly, we're not doing enough. There are mothers out there who are crying out for us to help them and we need to do it. We need to be courageous and we need to stand up and we need to stand behind them because they need us and if we

don't, we could end up again with something as tragic as Sandy Hook.

So I'm going to support this bill, but I'm not giving up on this mental health issue and I'm asking all of you in this room to come with me. Let's not give up on these families. They need us. And for the love of God, the children who could be hurt by somebody who's not getting help need us, too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, ma'am. Representative Chris Wright of the 77th.

REP. WRIGHT (77th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise today to discuss an issue that we've been hearing some about today, which is the Second Amendment and I think it's kind of important that we look into that issue since that is central to a lot of the arguments that are being made tonight.

Now, last week I had the good fortune of having dinner with an old friend of the family, Dr. Martin Babbitts who is a professor of history at the University of Colorado and Dr. Babbitts is a specialist in colonial and early American history and

we were discussing the Second Amendment and its history where it came from.

The Second Amendment was written because in the 1780s, the United States did not have a standing army. So instead of a professional standing army, Americans relied on soldier citizens, the state militia, and essentially, every adult male was a member of the state militia and could be called upon at any time and their duty was to defend the state and the country in case of an invasion or an insurrection or an Indian attack. Likewise, there was not a professional police agency either, so citizens could be deputized to help the sheriff, but this was not supposed to be a group of vigilantes, which is why the Second Amendment specifically states a well regulated militia.

Now, gun proponents often make the argument that the Second Amendment was written in order to allow citizens to take up arms and defend themselves against the government, but history does not really bear this out. In Federalist Number Nine, which was written by Alexander Hamilton and in Federalist Number Ten, which was written by James Madison, in those documents Hamilton and Madison both argued that the federal government will be used to put down insurrections.

And remember that chaise rebellion in Massachusetts that happened just the year before, and in that case, the federal government, which was working under the Articles of Confederation was powerless to get involved and it was entirely up to the State of Massachusetts to put down that rebellion.

Also in Federalist Number Twenty-Eight, Hamilton argues that the government might at different times, have to use military force in the form of state militias to put down rebellions and George Washington did exactly this in 1794 when he federalized the Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey militias to put down the Whiskey Rebellion.

We've also heard mentioned tonight Federalist Forty-Six, but it was misquoted somewhat. In Forty-Six, Madison talked about citizens with arms in their hands, but he was talking about citizens who were members of the state militia, officers by men chosen from among themselves, fighting for their common liberties and united and conducted by governments possessing their affections and confidence.

Madison was stating that if the federal government should raise an army to violate the liberty of the citizens, the states could use their militia to

resist the federal army. He is not talking about individuals taking guns in their own hands to resist the government, which is why he wrote, conducted by governments possessing their affections and confidence, the state governments.

So the argument that the Second Amendment was written to allow individuals to take up arms against the government that they felt was oppressive is not really borne out by history and it is not really based in fact.

We also heard tonight an argument that these mass shootings could not be stopped when an individual who's doing the shooting was changing magazine clips, but in fact, the shooter in the Phoenix shooting, in which six people were killed and Congresswoman Gabby Giffords was critically injured, was stopped only when he stopped to change clips, and in fact in the Aurora, Colorado shooting, that shooter was also stopped only when he stopped to change clips. So not only is it possible to stop a mass shooting when the shooter has to change clips.

In fact, history seems to show that that's the only way that they can be stopped.

So for these and other reasons, I will be voting yes today and I urge my colleagues to do the same. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Bolinsky of the 106th.

REP. BOLINSKY (106th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. As most of you know, I represent Newtown. As a matter of fact, most of the families who suffered the indescribable losses at Sandy Hook Elementary School on 12/14/2012 are my constituents.

Before I share my full comments about the bill before us, I ask that we all take a moment to remember 26 of the reasons why we're here today. If you'd join me in just a remembrance of Allison, Anna, Avielle, Benjamin, Caroline, Catherine, Charlotte, Chase, Daniel, Dylan, Emilie, Grace, Jack, James, Jesse, Jessica, Josephine, Madeleine, Noah, Olivia and the heroes who tried to save them, Dawn, Ann Marie, Lauren, Mary, Rachel and Vicki.

Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to get into anything deeply philosophical today. I'm also not going to bring any amendments. I know how disappointed you

might be in that. I'm just going to tell a short story, a personal story.

When I was elected to the House of Representatives in November, I was honored, very excited to enter these halls and have the opportunity as many other freshman Legislators to serve in a typical, freshman fashion. Learning from many esteemed colleagues, doing as much good as I could for my own hometown and my district in Newton, how could I know that beginning with my January 9th swearing in, I would be embraced and reached out to by nearly every single person in the Legislative Office Building and the Capitol Building.

Also, little did I know that so many politicians that I would meet could be so incredibly speechless when they met me. Tears were shed. Lots of hugs, and I dare say, not the typical freshman experience.

On December 14th, evil visited my town and everything changed. Since then I've spent countless hours in the community and on the phone listening to my constituents' feelings, reading correspondence, attending task force meetings, debating the issues and preparing for ultimately, this day.

All through this I've witnessed incredible, incredible strength in people, strength in community. Newtown is a truly remarkable place. Along with the strength, we've experienced a world of compassion pour out to our town. Words just can't describe the gratitude felt for all the prayers said on our behalf and the universal empathy expressed as well as the generosity of neighbors near and half way around the world.

I appreciate the efforts of our legislative leaders, trying to craft a bipartisan bill that has been known in the House up until today pretty much as the Newtown bill.

Mr. Speaker, I especially appreciate your work to ensure that the many diverse interests inherent in this Body were considered and seated at the table. This really was a bipartisan effort and you have my unwavering respect, as does my own leader, Larry Cafero, for having the confidence in me to allow me to sit as an honored member on the task force itself. So I've had an opportunity to see the operations of the making of this bill from the inside.

That said, the legislation before us is not perfect, particularly in the area that I believe was

the most directly responsible for the tragedy at Sandy Hook, mental health, as many of my esteemed colleagues have already mentioned.

Additionally, I've reached out and spoken to friends on Newtown's Board of Education. They concur. They concur. So we collectively call on the new Mental Health Task Force to expeditiously complete its work and create a safety net of risk recognition, mandatory reporting and early detection as well as interventional services that can flush out potential tragedies before the next mentally unstable young man decides to act.

But for now, I see the bill before us as a beginning in the process of addressing critical mental health issues. It also tightens and lays out historic school safety guidelines without mandates, and establishes what will be the toughest firearms control laws in our nation, while preserving the rights of responsible citizens under the Second Amendment.

After the massacre on 12/14, it was inevitable that changes to the current laws were coming. We all saw that. As a Representative of Newtown and the families who suffered unimaginable losses on that

terrible day, I have heard an overwhelming cry from my community for common sense firearms legislation.

I plan to vote yes on this legislation, and I dedicate my vote to the memory of those whose lives were lost at Sandy Hook Elementary School. Thank you very much to all of my colleagues for all of your support and understanding and for giving me a pass on the typical freshman experience, and I urge you to join me in the memory of 26 angels and find it in your heart to vote for this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Frey of the 111th.

REP. FREY (111th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And I have to say there's been a few very difficult acts to follow here this evening. I'm going to make this very short.

I wasn't going to say anything tonight and of course, that's one of the oldest sayings that we hear up here, and it dawned on me last night. I read a news account, a story in the New Haven Register that made me think that maybe I should say a couple of

words, and I'll be very brief, so if you'll indulge me.

My story starts the week before December 14th and I've got two nieces, twins who are in fourth grade at Sandy Hook and a first-grade nephew. Sandy Hook is K through 4.

And my sister just sent me a text the week before and said, look, the girls are singing in their holiday concert on December 13th. They'd love to see Uncle Johnny there, and I didn't respond. It's one of those things where I would have liked to have gone ordinarily, but something would come up and I'd miss it. And while Newtown is only 12 or 15 miles away, I didn't want to disappoint.

Well, the day of the 13th, that Thursday afternoon, I finished up my business early and decided I'm going to go up and surprise them and go see the concert. So, all of the fourth graders in Sandy Hook School participate in the holiday concert and I have to say they were quite good. Much better than when I was in fourth grade band or concerts. They were excellent.

They have so many people come that they have it at the Newtown High School, so it wasn't in the Sandy

Hook Elementary School, while I've been there before. I snuck in and I tweeted that I was at the concert, because I know my brother-in-law follows my tweets and a few minutes later he looked around and found me and my first-grade nephew came running up and joined me in sitting down.

Standing next to me was the principal and the vice-principal of Sandy Hook Elementary School beaming with pride at how the kids were performing, and it was such a pleasant evening, as you can imagine, as every other elementary school concert, parents were videotaping their kids. The younger siblings were running up and down the aisle and that scene haunted me for quite a while afterwards.

The next morning, so that night my brother-in-law took my nephew home and my sister with her fourth-grade twins went out to get yogurt with another family.

The next morning about quarter to ten I get a text from my sister. Something's going on at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. Can you nose around and let me know what's going on. So I went to the News Time Website and there's kind of a bulletin that said reported gunman at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

That's about all they said at that point. So I sent that text to my sister, that link to that story.

I didn't realize later on, and this is why I mentioned that's why I decided to stand up tonight. Last night in the New Haven Register one of the parents who came up here on Monday stated that 11 kids survived Sandy Hook, that they escaped the school. I knew that. Six kids escaped and went to a neighbor's house. I can't remember the gentleman's name, and ran out of the school. Five kids were running up the street when my sister was driving down Riverside Drive, Riverside Avenue, Riverside Drive. She picked them up and she pulled over and she saw all these five first graders tearing ass up the street way past the firehouse heading north, and she pulled over. She knew two of the kids and said, where are you guys going? You're supposed to be in school.

Well, there's a guy trying to kill us. He's got a gun. So she loaded the kids in the car, her van and called the school and there was no answer, and she called the police department and they said, bring the kids right here.

These kids had witnessed their teacher shot straight ahead and them Adam Lanza and I'm not going

to refer to his name again, but stood over her and shot her four more times. And they saw several of their classmates shot as well.

So my sister took these kids to the police department and as she's driving down Riverside past the school entrance, a lot of emergency vehicles are flying by. Newton Police, State Police, ambulances, you can imagine.

And she goes to the Newtown Police Department and they pretty much emptied out. There was a secretary and a dispatcher and probably not many other people there as they all have left. So they put my sister in a room with these five kids and said, take their names down. If you can call their parents, that's great. And the secretary came in a little while later. My sister was singing to these kids and the woman, I think it was a women who said, I can't believe what you're doing. She said, well, these kids need to be comforted, they need to be nurtured.

So the first half hour she didn't know the fate of her own kids until somebody sent her a text that they were seen and they were okay. They were lined up with the Sandy Hook Volunteer Fire Department and they were okay.

So it didn't dawn to me until much later that night what a hero my sister was and she said, well, you know, you would have done the same thing. I don't know. Maybe I would have stopped to pick up those five kids, but I can't imagine sitting with them in a room trying to comfort them, hearing their stories of how frightened they were of having seen their teacher murdered in front of them and not knowing the fate of her own kids, but she did it.

So finally she got hold of one parent and that parent came down actually along with their parents and she said, would you mind staying here? I need to go comfort my own kids at this point, and they did.

So I have to, I've tried to separate emotion from fact and I think I do a pretty good job of that, and this is coming from a guy who, I think I've been endorsed by the NRA every time I run for office. I certainly believe in the Second Amendment rights. I've spoken to first responders who were there, police chiefs, state troopers, parents, NRA members. I had lunch with the former NRA President in January. I really tried to do my homework on this subject.

I've had two training sessions on weapons. I'm not a real gun guy and my chief of police and our

training officer in Ridgefield, who went to the scene two, three days later and said look, I'm a dad first and a cop second and the collateral damage done was beyond words.

What the article pointed out to me last night when I read it and they said that, you know, one of the parents said that reports haven't really been clear, but 11 kids made it out of the classroom. I think it was the third classroom that he went into.

We all know, based on the police report or parts of the police report that were released recently that his goal was to have as much collateral damage as possible, and somehow, some way, God was on the side of these 11 first graders who in two groups escaped.

And I've heard two things that his magazine clip was empty. I've heard another one that it was jammed. I guess at some point we'll know the truth, and I've also heard that he was a very good shot. So I'm sure it was of some disappointment to him, unfortunately for him, that these 11 first graders escaped.

I've spoken to, like we all have, people on both sides. This isn't a perfect bill. I wish it wasn't going through E-Cert. I wish we had gone to public

hearing. I think some of the comments made tonight we could have perhaps made this bill better.

But there's enough in it, you know. The people who are concerned about their Second Amendment rights I think are still thinking that they could be a tax on ammunition or a restriction to purchase one gun a month, or a confiscation of magazines October 1st, or special insurance for gun owners or other things that are not included in this bill.

I agree with Representative Kupchik. She was extremely emotional, but I think she's correct. I think more focus needs to be put on mental health.

But after sleepless nights, and honestly, thinking about my nieces and nephew, I'd give my right arm for these kids. Bennett, I think there's five first-grade classrooms at Sandy Hook. The first classroom the teacher put the kids in the bathroom and barricaded the door and he looked in that classroom and he didn't see anybody and left. He went to the next classroom, and proceeded to do his thing and the next two classrooms.

I think Bennett would have been not in the fourth classroom but I think in the fifth. His classmates,

they were all standing in their cubbies behind their coats. Easy targets.

My fourth-grade nieces, one was in the library, one was in the gym. The one in the gym had to crawl, they went into the, the teachers did an amazing job. They waited until the police came. They had to crawl across the gym like Navy seals were trained and escaped and they were told not to look in a certain direction. They saw broken glass. They saw guys with machine guns, but they didn't see anything too worse than that.

One of my, as I mentioned before, the night of the concert my sister went out with another friend of hers and the kids were in the fourth grade chorus. That friend, that fourth grader, the friend of the family, lost her brother on the 14th.

Joanie, my niece, insisted on going to the wake. Now, she had been to a wake before. Her grandmother had passed away a couple of years ago and my sister said okay, you know what these are all about. You know what wakes are like. This might be different. Yes, I do. I want to go for my friend.

So they go. A white casket, open. A little bicycle, a little trophy, my niece's friend comes

running in. They go running to each other. My sister decides okay, I guess we're going to be here for a while. Joanie's comforting her friend.

A little while later my sister looks up and there's Joanie, my niece and her friend, kneeling at the casket. So later on, my sister asked her, so what happened there? How did that all occur? And she said well, her friend, I'm not going to say her friend's name, but her friend said, do you want to go see my brother? She said, sure. She said, well, I don't have to wait in the line. I'm family. We can cut, okay? So they cut in line.

And as I guess it's comforting to one fourth grader to another, Joanie says, gee, his nose looks bruised. And she said yeah, we heard that he fell down. But she stayed with her friend the entire time and has been a comfort to her, I think in a great way since then.

This has been interesting things. Joanie, the one that I'm talking about went to the Super Bowl and sang. I don't know if many of you saw that. But there are peaks and valleys. These kids are still going through therapy. The therapy dogs have been great. They do art therapy. They're trying to keep

them busy. In the beginning they had difficulty going to sleep. That's gotten better, as I said, our family is lucky. But who knows what the future will bring?

So as the Representative from Newtown mentioned that these 26 people who lost their lives, there are 11 students who saw the unmentionable happen in front of them, ten in one class and I think ten in one class and one in another? Is that correct? Eleven or twelve saw the unspeakable.

So I think while this bill could be better, it could have been a whole lot worse. So I thank the leaders for putting this together and I think having everyone's input in it was particularly wise and helpful and I'm not going to encourage people to adopt, you have to do what's in your heart.

But as I say, I've wrestled with this for some time and have lived through it. Have lived through Christmas when my nieces and nephew were rather quiet. It was a day that, Christmas I do at my house and part of me, I wished the whole thing was over.

And on the other hand, I wanted to make it especially special for these three kids. So I'm not going to urge you to vote yes or vote no, but vote what you think is right.

Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Hennessey of the 127th.

REP. HENNESSEY (127th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to thank Representative Frey for his sharing of his experience with his family and all the testimony that I've been hearing has been quite moving.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for this bill and for having the courage to bring this forward. You know, one of the interesting things about this type of thing is that you move fast after a tragedy because we're afraid that we're going to lose the horror of the event and there was questioning whether or not, you know, months went by and you know, I knew that that what we were doing in Connecticut was putting together good legislation that we could be proud of and very pleased to see that that is in fact what happened.

We didn't do a knee jerk reaction. We moved forward deliberately and came up with comprehensive legislation that we can be proud of.

I'd also like to speak about the lethal aspect of the assault weapon. We've been hearing terms that they are arbitrary cosmetic features that differentiate assault weapons from other weapons and I would just like to speak to that. I have a little bit of expertise. I was in the Army. I was stationed in the First Ranger Battalion in Georgia, went to Ranger School, received the coveted Ranger Tab. I was an expert infantryman. That's a course that you take and spent two years, basically with M-16s and M-60s and other weapons, and so I know about these weapons.

The only difference between the M-16 and the weapon that was used in Sandy Hook is basically that it was not automatic, but otherwise it was the same type of weapon that was designed for the battlefield. It's an extremely lethal weapon. And you know, the thing is that they're very easy to shoot. They're very easy to aim, even though they're single fire, you can pull the trigger really rapidly and in fact, create quite a stream of high velocity bullets.

These bullets go very fast. They're designed to create trauma when they hit a body, whereas a hunting rifle doesn't have that type of speed to it. It's not designed to traumatize. It's designed to take down

game that you intend to eat. These assault weapons are not designed that way. They're designed to create havoc on a dense body, water type body.

Pistol grip helps in aiming and there's a recoil suppression mechanism with these weapons that they don't really have recoil. It's absorbed in the stock and so it's very easy to keep on target. They're really kind of like toys. In fact, I remember looking at my weapon when I was in the Army and it was actually made by Mattel, so I thought that was kind of strange that a toy manufacturer was making the M-16.

And in regard to the high capacity magazines, when you're in a situation, a firing situation, your blood pressure is way up. Your heartbeat is going at 100 whatever and you are in a high state of anxiety, so when you stop slow to do a mechanical change, it's disconcerting.

I was told, I was never in combat, but I was told that when you're in combat, it's as if you have thick gloves on. You're just not very, your tactile abilities increase, so in fact they recommended that you train with gloves on, say, to simulate that type of combat depression of ability.

So I really kind of resent the fact that these weapons are being deemed as just cosmetic. They're not. They're designed for the battlefield and they don't belong in our state. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative McCrory of the 7th District. You have the floor, sir.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I have two questions to the proponents of the bill and then I'd like to express my commentary on the bill. I believe Representative Fox might be able to answer the first one.

It's regards to the registry. On Line 878 it states that the offender will have to --

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative McCrory, if you could just pause for a second because Representative Fox is not in the Chamber.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Oh, I'm sorry.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

If you'd like to stand at ease, we're getting him for your question.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Okay.

(CHAMBER AT EASE.)

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Please proceed.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Just a question in regard to the registry for the individual who has to apply or has to register. It states that if I'm reading this correctly, a blood sample or DNA sample might have to be required. Is that accurate? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative McCrory, could you just provide a reference in the bill to --

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Line 878.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, Representative McCrory. Representative Fox, do you care to answer it?

REP. FOX (146th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I see, so this is, I'm sorry. I stepped out of the Chamber for a second, but we're dealing with the deadly weapon offender registry and the question is who has to register.

And with respect to that Section C, which is 874 to 884, there are certain steps that go with registering, such as a photograph of the offender, fingerprinting, and if the offender is required to submit to the taking of blood sample then yes, they would be required to.

I think that is, what I'm saying is, I do not think it's a new requirement because actually as we are aware in this Chamber, those who are convicted of felonies do have to submit to a DNA sample anyway, so that's consistent with what the current law would be.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative McCrory.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And on Line 2063 if I'm reading this correctly it states that criminal possession of ammunition will be considered a Class C felony and two years of mandatory minimal. Is that correct?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

Through you, Mr. Speaker, this is 2063 to 2068, that is correct.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative McCrory.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

And if we're defining ammunition as a bullet, are we suggesting that if someone who may not be of a proper age which passage of this legislation is 21 years old to purchase ammunition, or if someone who is 16 or 17 year old has a bullet on them, they can be charged with a felony with two years mandatory minimal sentence?

Is that correct, Mr. Speaker, through you?

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

If they are not eligible to have ammunition, Mr. Speaker, then, excuse me, Mr. Speaker.

If this is the criminal possession of ammunition, so there are, it's only if they're ineligible because of their prior conviction of certain offenses and there's a list of those offenses on the next page.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative McCrory.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. And as we look at those offenses on the second page, are things like new legislation, it tells that a criminal offense of a listed (inaudible) now such as an altercation, a physical altercation will be designated an offense that will create that individual who has that bullet the opportunity to have that two-year mandatory minimal.

Is that correct? Through you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative Fox.

REP. FOX (146th):

If the question is, if someone had previously been convicted of one of these crimes that are listed here and then they are found in possession, which would make them ineligible to possess a firearm, it also does now include ammunition.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So --

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Representative McCrory.

REP. MCCRORY (7th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. So basically, sorry, thank you, sir. So what I'm clear on now is the fact

that if an individual had an altercation, which could be designated as a third degree assault, and after the passage of this legislation, if that individual is found with a bullet maybe in his car, maybe in his possession, that person is being a felon and will require a two-year jail sentence and a mandatory two-year jail time?

Mr. Speaker, I have no more questions to the proponent of the bill.

I guess my commentary on this bill is this. You know, every time we have major legislation before us that requires every single one of us to dig deep into our hearts and decide how we're going to vote on it, I, myself, always make sure I attend church services before we debate.

And this particular piece of legislation, not only did I attend on Sunday, I had a second opportunity to attend on Monday because this piece of legislation is that important.

About a month and a half ago, I had a community forum in my district around the issue of gun violence and I asked the community to come out and talk to me about solutions around gun violence. I just wanted to have a community dialogue.

And that morning before the community conversation I talked to my aide and she told me that someone by the name of Nilda Marquez Green had called the office and another member, Lee, from the Sandy Hook Promise Organization wanted to be a part of that community dialogue in the north end of Hartford.

And when I called her back she was very polite and didn't want to intrude on this community dialogue in the north end of Hartford with myself and many other people from the Capitol who came today. That dialogue, we had a police chief, the Mayor, former Representative Michael Lawlor, Chief State's Attorney's Office, Chief Public Defender's, we had a number of policymakers at this dialogue.

And I was kind of hesitant at first, because I didn't want to make this a big political event. I really wanted solutions to gun violence in the urban community. But we agreed that she could come and not only that, I said, I'll give you an opportunity to speak because you just lost your loved one, and not only that, she was born and raised in the City of Hartford.

So when the dialogue began, I was confronted by a grandmother who had lost her loved one a few years

back. Now mind you, over the past ten years in the Capitol City, we have had over 300 murders, and this grandmother came to me in front of all my colleagues and all those individuals there and she looked me in my eyes and she said to me, the only reason why you're here is because of what happened at Sandy Hook.

I had no response. It was the first time in my professional and political career that I could not come up with an appropriate response to a constituent, and I was hurt. Because what she said to me was absolutely right.

She was on point, and I didn't know how to respond.

As the dialogue continued, Nilda Marquez Green spoke so candidly and so openly and so honestly and what she did was connect the pain, the hurt, the struggle, the empathy and sympathy of the families in Newtown, Connecticut with the families in Hartford, Connecticut. She was outstanding.

And I'll never forget the line she said, and it was quoted in the paper. She said that she was overwhelmed and kind of embarrassed by the amount of attention that her family and the families in Newtown received from people all over this world and she felt

as though it was unfair. These are her words. It was unfair that because of where she lived the concern and care of everybody in this country and this world was different for the concern and care for that grandmother and the mothers, grandmothers that lived in the north end of Hartford.

You couldn't find a dry eye in that church, including myself. She linked those two communities that night forever. She made it real, and I respect her and the families of Newtown, Connecticut for doing that because the pain that they felt that December afternoon, is the pain, is the pain that these families have been having in these cities for years.

And it is a shame, a shame in itself, that I could not respond to that grandmother, and tonight I want to publicly apologize for not being there for those families who lost loved ones year after year after year.

And it's not like we haven't tried to change gun laws in Connecticut before this evening. My colleague Representative Dargan has said that, but we couldn't get it done.

It was stated earlier that we put funding in for the Gun Trafficking Task Force. I think that's a good

thing. But when that comment was made that said this will be a strong investment in the inner cities. Now you think about that.

We need to fund a gun task force for it to be an investment? No. If you want to invest in these inner cities, invest in the human capital that exists there. Provide opportunity for the young people who are not caught up in this foolishness of gun violence.

So when you listen to us, fight for more programs that prevent. When you listen to us, fight for after school activities, it's because the children who live in those communities do not have the options that others have and it's no one's fault.

That's the ball they was given to play with. It's not like we want something that we don't deserve. What those children want is opportunity.

Before I came this morning to Session, I had to go to a funeral service, and here's the program. There was a funeral service for a 19-year-old young man that was gunned down last week on Clark Street in Hartford. We had a bloody week in this City, the Capitol City, if anyone knows.

Now I took it upon myself to go to the funeral service. I knew his family and while I was there, I

saw a former student of mine and before I left he said to me, what are you going to do about it?

And I said, what do you think I should do about it? He said, Mr. McCrory, just help the young ones. Just help the young ones.

There were over 500 people at that funeral service and I can guarantee you over 300 were under the age of 21. Many of them live in that same community. Right on the same block where that young man was murdered with a weapon of mass destruction there's an elementary school.

Three days after that murder, there was another murder on the other block on Barber Street. Don't you think those children know what happened in their community? Don't you think those children right now need mental health services right now? Don't those families need counseling right now?

Not because we're going to pass this legislation because once we pass it, yes, sure, we're going to pick and choose who gets the supports. Shame on us for doing that. Shame on us for deciding that after we pass this legislation, some communities will get the supports they need and others won't.

God help us if we come to that point, that we're going to pick and choose. It's not right. It's just not right.

Mr. Speaker, I wish I had the opportunity to serve on some of these task forces. I wish I had that opportunity but I didn't.

So tonight we have a piece of legislation in front of us and it's going to pass, and everyone who knows me here, I'm the most bipartisan person in this Legislature. We're going to pass it because we have agreed. It's going to get signed. The President of the United States will be at the University of Hartford on Monday. He's going to champion his cause and bring it to Washington, D. C. and see if we can get bipartisan agreement on a larger measure.

But if you ask me as an educator, the grade I give to this piece of legislation is incomplete. It's incomplete because it doesn't speak to the issue of gun violence that has permeated our cities and this great state.

I will argue that the title of Senate Bill 1160 AN ACT CONCERNING GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION is a misnomer, because we don't have a dollar of prevention in this bill.

Now we might do something by the end of this Session to put funding in for prevention programs that we know work, but tonight that's not what we're doing. We have an agreement that everyone's not happy about it, but we're going to pass it, and pat ourselves on the back.

And you know what? It might prevent, it may prevent another Newtown from happening. It may prevent or get someone some mental health services, and it may make our schools a little safer. But it won't address the core issue of gun violence, illegal guns, opportunity that must be checked and when we get to that, then I will stand up and then I'll rally behind every last one of you and I'll go back to that grandmother and say, my colleagues understand your pain and never again, never again, will we overlook you and come to you when the house is on fire. We'll listen to your concerns before and we'll craft legislation that supports and move you and your children forth.

Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to express my concerns, and because of that, don't think that I'm against what's in this bill, because what's in this bill is good. But it

doesn't go far enough and because I am a man of my word and my character, I cannot support it. I cannot support it.

Now, we might do something later in the Session. I doubt if we do anything else on guns. It's just a little too controversial, but we might do something later to get to the core things that we talked about, that I talked about. But tonight I can't support it, but you guys do what you have to do.

I appreciate your time and your ear. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Buck-Taylor of the 67th.

REP. BUCK-TAYLOR (67th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm humbled by so much that I've heard tonight. I had no idea when I was (inaudible) on to the Session how difficult this was going to be.

I feel very deeply for the loss of the families of the people of Newtown. When I first heard the news of what was happening, I was stunned. Time kind of stood still. It stood still the same way it did when

I heard the news of 9-1-1. There was a surreal aspect to it.

I don't own a gun. I'm not a member of the NRA. I support mental health. I support protecting children from harm. I have been a court appointed guardian and an attorney for a lot of children who have suffered from horrible abuse and injuries. I've served on my local board of education. I support keeping illegal weapons away from criminals and punishing severely those who commit violent crimes.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that you and my leader, Larry Cafero, and many people have worked long and hard on this bill and I commend you. Through everyone's efforts this bill has come a long way from what was originally proposed.

I know that people will be voting tonight. They'll be voting their conscience and I support them.

I'm voting no on this bill, not because I'm against everything in this bill. There are positive provisions regarding mental health and school safety that I support, but I do not believe that they outweigh the ones that are overreaching in their impact.

By not allowing us tonight to separate the individual components of this bill into school safety, mental health and gun control, we are limited to an all or none vote. Each of these issues deserved individual consideration and an individual vote.

I also believe that resorting to the E-Cert process was unnecessary. It's not how our democracy is supposed to work, especially when the rights of our citizens are being jeopardized.

This E-Cert process circumvents the usual process of public hearings and committee hearings, which I believe would have benefitted us all.

We hear a lot that we want Connecticut to be number one in gun control. I would be so much more proud if I could say that we were number one in providing care for those with mental health issues, that we were number one in making our schools safe, that we were number one in protecting our citizens' constitutional rights.

In the words of Ronald Reagan, it's a nasty truth, but those who seek to inflict harm are not phased by gun control laws. This package, if it had been enacted before the tragedy on December 14th, would not have stopped what occurred in Newtown. I

just do not believe that this bill will stop the next one either.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, madam. Representative Phil Miller of the 36th.

REP. MILLER (36th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and good morning.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good morning, sir.

REP. MILLER (36th):

I want to briefly speak on the gun culture, which all of us live in. Whether you represent towns in the country or our cities, we all live in the gun culture.

In recent years this new century, what has happened is the traditional hunting gun market has fallen off a cliff. In places like Connecticut, most of our hunters have been aging and we were just told over the last week in Environment that we have over 100,000 deer here in Connecticut but we're not keeping up with harvesting that herd so we have over 1,000 deer car incidents every year.

Because the hunting gun market has dropped off, there's other aspects, which have taken its place. In

recent years it's the advent of military bred weaponry and handguns, whose sales are up 70 percent in the last five years alone.

Last year, $1.5 billion in sales in America and these revenues are pretty brisk and there's a lot of excitement. And AR-15 enthusiasts will tell you that they can fire 400 rounds in 60 seconds, and at 50 cents a bullet that's $200 in one very destructive and hot minute.

And there's a lot of rhetoric. When a United States Senator, Mark Prior from Arkansas says that our President is quote, his own stimulus plan for the gun industry, that's just a continuation of this rhetoric that people have been hearing now for a while, that the government wants your guns. They're coming to take away your guns, and I'm even getting e-mails, as many of our peers here are, suggesting that what we're considering tonight is but a first step toward that eventuality.

But the numbers show that this is an industry that's really working hard, because a generation ago, almost 50 percent of the households in America had a gun and today it's less than a third. So the industry needs replacement shooters.

So what they're doing right now is they're marketing aggressively to new classes of customers, primarily children and women. In America today, less than 15 percent of the women own guns, so that's a niche that the industry has been targeting with great success.

And at the risk of sounding irreverent, I will state the truth, that they're so successful in this they convinced the murderer's mother in Newtown to buy an arsenal worth thousands of dollars, and the marketing is built around a lot of slick and hot stuff.

Two Christmases ago, a Connecticut manufacturer, Stag Arms, was offering a special executive survivor's kit. It featured a fancy wheeled briefcase complete with an Armington 15 with high capacity ammunition, a first-aid kit and military rations, and all for the price of $2,012, just in time for the Mayan Apocalypse.

But there is a Mayan Apocalypse right now in Mexico. Thousands of people killed, and of all the guns that are looked at, it's found that more than 90 percent of them come from America, mostly gun shows in the southwest.

Well, I'm hoping that, well, of course there's nothing ever good that could come from a tragedy like we've seen, but there are two things going on that maybe are the beginning of a seed change, if you will.

Throughout America right now, since December, academic institutions and corporations have been rushing to divest themselves from investments that they have in the gun industry for ethical or public relations reasons. That's one thing that's a positive trend, hopefully.

And the second thing is what we're doing here tonight, and I think we've heard some people say that what we're doing is too much. Others feel that it's not enough and maybe that's what a compromise is, where no one is truly happy but it is a step, and maybe others will follow us, and maybe in the future we'll be able to get things a little better, tighten things up, loosen up some things that are maybe too restrictive.

But I want to thank our leadership on both sides of the aisle for their most thoughtful evaluation of this entire subject and for having the stick-to-it-iveness to do something effective and so I rise in

support of this and I hope my colleagues would join me.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Godfrey of the 110th.

REP. GODFREY (110th):

Good morning, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good morning, sir.

REP. GODFREY (110th):

This isn't the first time I have stood at the floor of the House, the Connecticut House of Representatives to speak in favor of bills dealing with gun responsibility. I've done this many times before. I expect to do it again because I think there are some deficiencies in this bill and there are certainly, as we have heard in the debate tonight, many, many other issues related to gun violence that we're going to have to wrestle with in the coming months and years.

For me, personally, my advocacy regarding fighting gun violence happened in the 1960s where the terrible history changing assassinations affected me,

and interesting to know, it is now the morning of April 4th, and 45 years ago today, an evil carrying a Remington rifle came into a balcony in a motel in Memphis, Tennessee and Martin Luther King died.

I had gone on, was in the Navy, learned how to operate and take care of, in every sense of the word, small arms. The Navy of course, uses some pretty big caliber guns, not necessarily this stuff. I know about those kinds of weapons of mass destruction, too. Seen them. Been around them. Didn't fire them but I'm aware, and in the course of time became a Member here in the House of Representatives.

And in the summer of 1989, the lives of five Connecticut children were ended and the cause was the second leading child killer in the United States and it isn't a disease, it wasn't a disease. It was from stupid adults who left loaded hand guns in the reach of children. It was quite the public sensation that year. People were outraged, and rightfully so.

And I came to know about one of those five children. He was 12 years old. His name was D.J. Kenny. He lived in Naugatuck. He had been spending some time across the street from his house after school one afternoon with some friends where an

unthinking adult who should have known better had left a loaded hand gun sitting on top of the refrigerator.

We never officially learned the sequence of events. It was all in juveniles, whose records are sealed, still. But when it was over, D.J. was dead.

His mother, Susan, you can imagine, was inconsolable, but she was also angry, I understand anger, when she learned that there was no penalty that could be levied against these stupid adults that left the loaded gun out. None. Was off. Scott free.

So she came to us. She petitioner her government for a redress of her grievance. That is also enshrined in the Bill of Rights. She enlisted her friends and neighbors in her cause. She had an organization called Gun Responsibility in Every Family, GRIEF for short.

And D.J., well, at least his picture literally became the poster boy sadly surrounded by the headline, this is not a missing child. His mother visits his grave daily.

So in 1990 a few of us took up her cause. I worked with then Representative Peter Smith, a Democrat of Milford, then Representative Chris Burnham, a Republican of Stamford. We were mentored

by one of the senior Members of the House of Representatives, Marty Looney from New Haven, and we drafted legislation and joined Susan in her advocacy to make it a crime to negligently store firearms so that children may have easy access. It was the Kids and Guns Bill as it was referred to at the time.

Unsurprisingly, the gun lobby trotted out its usual assortment of tricks, delay, misinformation, personal attacks, distraction, which we've seen repeated over and over since, including recently.

I was especially infuriated when they said that D.J.'s death was Mrs. Kenny's fault. She was a bad mother. She shouldn't have left her child go out. It burned me, very, very, I'm still angry 20 odd years later over that kind of disrespect.

Senate Bill 307 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF OWNERS OF FIREARMS WITH RESPECT TO CHILDREN passed the Senate 30 to 4 and the House of Representatives, 146 to 3, although not without several attempts to derail the bill to kill the amendments. It became law, and since that became law, we have not experienced the level of deaths such as D.J. since. There has not been a terrible summer of five deaths of guns left unattended.

Certainly, the publicity, Susan's especially, that came out of that year did make parents much more aware. It was a parenting skill you had to learn. If your child was going over on a play date at a friend's house, could you ask the parents if there are loaded guns in the house before the kid goes over? It's gone a very, very long way and I feel very good that the action we took, her advocacy has meant. You're never going to be able to prove this, but in my heart of hearts I do believe kids are alive today that would not have been had we not gone through that effort.

And I think of D.J. every so often, especially much more frequently since December 14th. Had he lived he'd be in his mid-30s now, maybe with a son or daughter of his own, another ordinary family man, a dad who enjoyed his family's life, not merely the face on a facing poster with the headline of GRIEF.

Since 1989 we've advanced the cause of gun responsibility. We banned assault weapons. We have updated the 1993 law several times. Sarah Brady came up. Her husband, as you remembered, was grievously injured in an assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan that triggered not only our own response here in Connecticut, which has been a permanent ban on

assault weapons, and which we are fixing yet again tonight, but it did result in an effective federal law that unfortunately has lapsed.

We also passed the Firearms Crime and Sales Act, almost all of these usually in response to some kind of terrible event, some of us can remember. The massacre at Lottery Headquarters. That triggered a lot of activity and action, too. That has gone for the good and we will go further today.

Although sometimes we do have to understand that to get a loaf of bread you finally have to, you usually have to go a slice at a time or take another slice, a big one, this time, this night.

And in 2013, some of the circumstances are different than in 1990. The Legislature is much different. The nation is much different. We have, we are all now constantly under the eye of what I call little brother, you now, it's the Internet and instant messaging and phone cameras and Tube and blogs of the eyes are on us and everybody else it seems in the world, something that in 1989 was undreamed of. Indeed, in 1989 the introduction of computers and even CT-N to this place was very far in the future, some years away.

The General Assembly was much different, a little more civil, a little more companionable. We rubbed elbows in and out of the building. More work was done in public and within the constitutional constraints of the length of our Sessions. We were a little more laid back. We were much less formal. We didn't have the pressures, I think that we have now.

You can argue whether that was better or not. And some things, though, are the same. In 1999 the parent of D.J. Kenny came to us. In 2013 the parents of Charlotte Bacon, Daniel Barden, Olivia Engel, Josephine Gay, Ana Marquez Green, Dylan Hockley, Madeleine Hsu, Catherine Hubbard, Chase Kowalski, Jesse Lewis, James Mattioli, Grace McDonell, Emilie Parker, Jack Pinto, Noah Pozner, Caroline Previdi, Jessica Rekos, Avielle Richman, Benjamin Wheeler and Allison Wyatt came to us as did the family members of the courageous educators Rachel Davino, Dawn Hochsprung, Anne Marie Murphy, Mary Sherlach, Victoria Soto and Lauren Rousseau.

Susan Kenny got her law in 1990. Advocates in 2013 almost. I agree with them. The bill before us does fail to give them the ban on large capacity magazines or a vote on it that they asked us for.

They are content, as am I now, that we should go forward with the bill. Because of that omission, this is not the toughest gun law in the county, in the country, and I'm sorry for that. I would apologize to them for not quite being able to get over the goal line on that, but it is a very big step in the right direction. It's another slice of the loaf.

It includes real reforms, not only in government responsibility, but also beginning a multi-year deliberation of access to mental health care and protecting students without imprisoning or frightening them, the solutions of which are going to be very expensive and will be therefore, very controversial. It's going to be quite the challenge we're going to have to collectively face in the next, in the months and years ahead to deliver on all of the concerns and promises that we've made and the additional ones so eloquently made again tonight about dealing with the cultures of gun violence in the United States.

For me, Mr. Speaker, while in our Caucus, in the Democratic Caucus, I think I live closest to Sandy Hook Elementary School. Ana Marquez Green's dad is a highly regarded part of Western Connecticut State University, about six blocks from my house.

Dawn Hochsprung's widower, George, taught until very recently in Danbury's Roger's Park Middle School, a block over from my house.

The injured on December 14th were rushed to Danbury Hospital, ten minutes from my house and were treated by caring, health professionals known to my mom, a retired registered nurse.

I really can't be awfully dispassionate nor objective about that day, about what it has done to the greater community in western Connecticut, for this is about people, my neighbors know and love.

My enthusiasm is slightly eclipsed because as I firmly believe that we should have gone a little further tonight. I understand the legislative process as well as anybody, I think, in this building. We could have done a little better. A little too much, in my opinion was omitted. This isn't the toughest bill in the nation, but it is much, much better than current law.

And it's not a great bill, but in our traditional legislative speak, it is a good bill, and it ought to pass, Mr. Speaker. Thank you.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. The distinguished Minority Leader, Representative Larry Cafero.

REP. CAFERO (142nd):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Ladies and gentlemen, 84 days ago, we all began a journey together. We began that journey by raising our right hand and taking an oath in this very room. We began a journey as the 2013-2015 Legislature, General Assembly.

And we knew that day, unlike most opening days and I've had the privilege of participating in 21 of them. When usually you start on opening day, you sort of know what's ahead of you in general terms. You know you have to do a budget and you know you're going to debate many bills and you know you have a lot of committee meetings, but you don't know with specificity what you might be facing in the course of that Session.

But on January 9th, whether you were a Wily veteran or a brand new freshman, we all knew that we had a specific job to do. As a matter of fact, that journey started actually 25 days before January 9th, on December 14th.

It's been said so many times in this Chamber, certainly today and in the past. We all remember

where we were on that day, similar to many other catastrophic events that we faced in our lifetime. We will never forget where we were on that day, and those of us in this room on that day were all State Representatives elect. We had not yet taken the oath of office. Yes, many of us were serving in the prior Legislature and many of us were excited to start our new Session having just been elected in November, some brand new first-time Legislators.

But on that moment on December 14th, we knew what faced us then because I'm sure all of us having this unique privilege to be State Representatives, on that very day as we watched television reports and read newspapers with our family and our neighbors, we were asked the question that my wife asked me on that day. Six words. What are you going to do?

And all of us knew that almost collectively the state and because of the unique nature of this horrific event, the country and maybe the world were watching us and thinking, what are you going to do?

I think we'd be lying if we said we had the answer then, but each and every one of us I am convinced, had the will and determination to do something. That's what we do. That's why we were

elected. We were elected to help the people we represent and the state as a whole.

The whole state, let alone this Chamber, was in mourning then, and to some extent is still in mourning. It's been a very different Legislative Session for me and I presume you. Yes, you have the camaraderie and some of the typical things, but there's been a cloud over us. There's been a sadness. Christmas wasn't the same and even opening day wasn't as joyous. Birthdays and holidays since have been great, but we're a state in mourning over this tragedy.

And as Representative McCrory said so beautifully, unfortunately this tragedy also reminded us of the tragedies that go on every day in this state, many of which are as a result of gun violence and we kept saying or were asked, what are you going to do?

We had different opinions on what to do. There are many organizations and many of us individually, all with good intentions that had immediate suggestions on what to do. They ranged from one side of the spectrum to the other. Good intentions.

Within hours of us taking the oath of office and the time by which we are allowed to submit bills, there were bills that were going to get at the heart of the problem, we thought and hoped, but done so in different ways.

We saw bills before us that thought we might tax ammunition, or we might limit guns to only one bullet, or we might get rid of all of what we call assault weapon guns or very dangerous guns.

We might limit the amount of guns you could purchase in any given year or month. We might make it tougher for a person to buy guns. We should focus on mental health. We should certainly first and foremost make sure our children are safe in school. We thought all those things and we had different ways of thinking about it.

To the Speaker's credit, coming off our experience in December with a deficit mitigation, the Speaker and the President Pro Tem of the Senate reached out to our side of the aisle, and frankly, he did not have to. Any piece of legislation can go through this process in the normal course of committees where the Democratic Party enjoys a two to one majority, both Chambers.

So if there was a distinction between how to solve this problem or what we should do that was along party lines, it could have been done by one party. It could have been done quickly or through the normal process, and it could have been done without listening to the opinions of this side of the aisle.

But our Speaker and President Pro Tem Williams did not want that to happen because I believe they felt that the incident was so horrific and so important to deal with, that we needed to do something different.

And that's when the Speaker invited myself and Senator McKinney and our respective Caucuses to participate in that process, and I've got to tell you I remember distinctly, we didn't know what to expect. It was sort of the first time for all of us. We created a special commission.

I remember our first meeting, Mr. Speaker. We were asked various questions by varying committee Members about the rules of our committee and we sort of looked at each other like, humahnah, humahnah, humahnah, well we're going to wing it. We'll do our best and we'll be clumsy and trip and fall a little

bit and we'll do our best because we're trying to do something.

And 52 of the people in this room and upstairs got together as this Sandy Hook Commission in equal numbers with regard to party, divided into three working groups and started discussions.

And first and foremost, first and foremost, we said we have to listen. We have to listen to all the stakeholders. We have to listen to all the people we represent as to what they feel about mental health and school security and gun violence, and then we have to educate ourselves on what we were going to legislate.

You see, unlike the experience that Representative Miner had told about his childhood, there were many of us, certainly myself, that did not have that same sort of experience with guns and hunting and shooting. I didn't know much about it. But I said, as I know many of you did, by God, if I'm going to legislate about it, I'd better learn.

And we started our educational process. We went to, some of us went to the so-called Guns 101 course at the Department of Public Safety. We went to various gun stores and shooting ranges and had conversations with law enforcement to learn about the

guns that we were going to be discussing, to learn about their capabilities, their physical characteristics, what the various parts were called.

We learned about areas of mental health that maybe were never really our focus as individuals, or our areas of expertise, but we knew we had to learn something.

We knew we had to learn about school safety and all the various nuances and technology that pertains thereto, and all of us, we reached out to every stakeholder, as I indicated before.

I'll speak for myself because I know that my experience probably mirrors many of yours. I met with members of the NRA and the sportsmen's clubs and the CCDL. I met with the March for Change Group, the Newtown Alliance, the Sandy Hook Promise.

I met with gun control groups and gun rights groups. I met with neighbors. I met with people. Like many of you I sat across tables with the parents who lost their children. Toughest thing I ever did.

I sat across from grieving mothers and held their hand as they wept and said, what are you going to do? Please stop. I can't fathom any other mother going through what I went through.

I sat across law-abiding, respectful, informative, amazing people, men and women who taught me about their respect for human life and their respect for the weapons that they felt were their constitutional right to own. Heartfelt people, people who were as moved as anyone with regard to the tragedy that took place, but wanted to be there to say, please don't forget we have a constitutional right to bear these arms. They're not, in Connecticut, uniquely just the Second Amendment, folks.

You see, on that January 9th when we started our journey together, we raised our right hand and solemnly swore to defend and protect and abide by the Constitution of the United States and the State of Connecticut Constitution, and in that Constitution it says very simply and clearly, that every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state. Every citizen has a right to bear arms in defense of himself and the state.

And we also learned and believed and have done before and recognize the fact that as a government we have a duty for public safety, and therefore we have the right to regulate that constitutional right. But

we had to be careful of how far we went, and there was the rub, folks. There was the rub.

What were we going to do? And I saw it on all of our faces. I saw it on the faces of my Caucus members. I saw their faces in committees or walking up the stairs. I saw the stress, the worry. It was tearing us apart and it still is, because we're all good, decent people who love our state and want to do our job right and want to answer the question, what are you going to do?

That's been the battle and that's been the struggle. So going back to that process I referred to, we found these subcommittees coming up together with ideas, many of them in consensus with both sides of the aisle, with some ideas that weren't, and these ideas by design filtered up to the leadership.

The leadership, at this point in time happened to be six guys, some who knew something about guns, some who didn't, all of which wanted to do the right thing and hopefully we could do it together, but there was a lot of differences of opinion in that room.

It ranged from eliminating a lot of guns to don't touch any gun. It focused on, well why can't we focus

on mental health and school safety and some say we have to address these assault weapons and magazines.

And like those debates that were raging in the hallways here and in the kitchens and street corners of our state, those debates raged in the room that we sat in for hours and hours and hours and hours, and yes, that door was closed, but make no mistake about it, and I've heard this said, these decisions were made in closed doors.

By God, I've been here 21 years and I can't ever remember hear or getting more input, having more public hearings, yes, on the very provisions that are in this bill, in fact, every provision that's in this bill in one form or another had a public hearing in this General Assembly.

It was a difficult process, but a necessary one, and during that process, there's a give and there's a take, and we ended up with this bill.

Everyone said it and I'll say it because I think everyone feels the same way. Not everyone loves this bill. We like certain parts of it and we don't like others. We think certain parts have gone too far and certain parts didn't go far enough.

That's the nature of a democracy. That's the nature of a compromise.

One of the things, though, I want to make sure everybody knows, is the truth. The reality of what's in this bill and not the myths. I'm sure that each and every one of you have been confronted with people on either side, or any side of this issue that had very strong opinions, and by God, they're entitled to them, but it might have been frustrating to you when their opinions were based on misinformation, and there was so much of it out there.

Oh, maybe that's our fault. Maybe because the details weren't broadcast or communicated clearly enough or often enough. Maybe it was the fault of others who wanted to purposely misrepresent various things, but there was a lot of misrepresentation out there.

I think each and every one of us, and here's the reality, each and every one of us respect the fact that the Constitution of the United States of America guarantees a right to bear arms, and each and every one of us respects the fact as we took an oath to defend it, that the State of Connecticut's Constitution gives the right to bear arms in self

defense. Everyone knows that. Everyone believes that.

And when we entered that room, we wanted to make sure that we had that right balance between those law-abiding gun owners and our duty for the public safety, and we went back and forth as I said on all of those ideas that were brought about by all the various parties and by people in this room, and here's what we ended up with.

We decided that nobody who owns a gun legally in the State of Connecticut was going to have that gun taken away from them. Nobody. It was their right to possess it. They possessed it legally. It is their property. They should be able to keep it.

You might disagree with that. I respect that, but that's what's in this bill.

We said that with regard to magazines, high capacity magazines, that though we might no longer allow them to be sold in the future, those who had them would be allowed to keep them. They bought them legally. It is their property. We were not going to take them away from them and we would allow them to use them so long as they had them. You might not like that, but that's what's in this bill.

We said that there has to be reasonable registration for weapons, certainly those that we were banning, but we weren't going to have universal registration. We weren't going to force people to register guns that they never before had to register. You might not like that, but that's in this bill. There is no universal registration.

We said we thought it was sort of reasonable and sort of made common sense that when you bought a weapon you should have a background check, and we discovered, as we all knew, that there were certain instances in practice that didn't need a background check, and we felt we should close those loopholes, whether that was at a gun show or at a private sale. You might not like that, that's in this bill.

We thought that people who purchased a weapon that we should know that they are eligible to purchase the weapon, that we know who they are and we run fingerprint checks on them, so we could make sure they are eligible, legally eligible to purchase a weapon, and we felt it was important that they be trained in how to use the weapon.

Not that they couldn't get the weapon, but they were trained on how to use the weapon. So we created

an eligibility certificate. Is it an extra step for some gun owners to take? Yeah, it is. It is. Is it an unreasonable or unnecessary step? I don't think so, my opinion. I respect yours. My opinion.

But that was the balance to struggle we kept going through. Are we going to put law-abiding citizens who've already had eligibility certificates to buy their pistols and pistol permits and have gone through all the loops and haven't done a darned thing wrong and followed all the rules. Are we going to make them go through extra steps? As most best we can, we tried not to.

If you want to buy ammunition, you could do so with your pistol permit. If you want to buy a long gun, you don't have to go through the process again. You already have a pistol permit or eligibility certificate.

We tried to take into account that people are people and human beings are human beings and if they have to declare something that they legally own because it's going to be banned in the future and they might have forgot, we're not going to throw them in jail and give them a D felony. We'll give them a

break. We're trying to be reasonable. Do you like it? Maybe not. It's in the bill.

And as people started to learn about what was in the bill, I'll tell you an experience I Had today. We had many law-abiding gun owners here today that were very concerned about what they'd been hearing and for whatever reason, I was singled out as someone they should talk to.

I left my office early in the morning and I walked out and encountered some of these law-abiding gun owners and they were not pleased with me. I invited them into my office and I had a chat with them about the bill and asked them about their concerns, and I had an opportunity to answer every one of their questions.

Now, I'm not going to lie to you. I'm not going to lie to you and say they walked out saying you're the best. No, they still were not happy with the bill, but they thanked me. They thanked me and I'm not just saying me, they thanked us for keeping them in mind because in their opinion, the bill was not nearly as bad, not nearly as restrictive, not nearly as offensive as they were told it would be, and they

say, we thank you for trying your best to keep us in mind.

Again, you might not like it. It's in the bill because the bill's a compromise. It's a process. That's what we did.

I don't know if it would prevent a Sandy Hook. I guess that was sort of our goal. I don't know if it will stop some of the gun violence in many of the cities we have as Representative McCrory alluded to. I pray to God it does.

I pray to God it does, because I can't think about going through another day meeting another parent who might have lost a kid. I can't even fathom it.

Folks, we have worked very hard. We're all very tired and I don't say that for sympathy. We signed up for this job. We're tired and fatigued because we put so much into this. We should be proud of the process. We should be at least aware and understanding of exactly what's in the bill, which is our product.

I want to tell you how proud I am of you and how proud I am to be a part of this General Assembly. This evening I sat in this Chamber for hours and listened to my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. I watched your faces. I saw what you said. I felt it.

I saw how much research you did and the detail that you've done and I know how hard you worked, some of you that had nothing to do with a particular committee, but you from that very beginning were trying to answer the question, what are you going to do?

It's been hard on us. We've neglected a lot of things on behalf of our constituents because of this. We have to do that. Coming to this compromise will give us an opportunity to address those other very important issues.

Oh, I don't think this is the end of a gun debate. It is this year, but I don't think it's the end of us talking about mental health and school safety and gun violence as Representative McCrory alluded to and various other parts of our state.

But for now, we can say we gave it our best shot. We hope it's the right thing. Today is not a day to celebrate or slap five or pop champagne corks. I don't even know if I'm going to attend, and I mean this with no disrespect, the bill signing tomorrow, if this passes, and I say that because we did our job. We have to move on and do other jobs. The bill has to be signed to become law. That's the Governor's

privilege and prerogative. We did our job. We did it together. We did the best we could, and I think we did a good thing.

So I'd ask you to give some thought to supporting this. Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. The distinguished Majority Leader, Representative Aresimowicz.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a long day, night, and now into the morning for all of us in this Chamber. We all remember where we were on December 14th when we got the text message, the e-mail, the phone call, or happen to be by a TV.

Our hearts all skipped that collective beat as we thought immediately, is it true? Did this really happen? It's got to be wrong. This can't happen. It can't happen in Connecticut. It cannot happen in one of our towns.

I think soon thereafter the details started to emerge. We're all glued to our TVs, holding our kids if we had them, thinking of those families, thinking of those brave children and what those moments must have been like.

For the past few months we've been working on this bill. I don't think there was a moment, whether it was the subcommittees, whether it was the leaders or it was any of you in this room that we didn't think about those parents, we didn't think about those children. It was so important. As Larry said, our opening day just wasn't the same.

We met that day upstairs to start to work on this bipartisan committee and it had to be bipartisan. Keeping children safe is not a partisan issue. It's not. The subcommittee's proceedings, our proceedings, followed the very same tenor that was here tonight. Respect, understanding.

I think as both Representative McCrory was speaking and Representative Frey, all of us were fighting back the tears. So we took on the task to come up with a comprehensive bill to go over the three areas that we said were the important areas, gun safety, significantly expands the assault weapon ban.

Large capacity magazines are not going to be for sale in Connecticut any more. You want to buy ammunition, you better at least have a background check so we know that you're eligible to have that ammunition.

Storage, store your weapons. Store them properly. Firearms tracking and illegal possession. Dangerous crimes with weapons, we're going to know about them. We're creating the School Safety Infrastructure Council, develop standards, work with our school systems. They're the ones they know. They're out there every day. Our board of eds have some of the most talented people on them. Let's trust what they say. Let's give them the tools. Let's give them the funds to institute some of these changes.

There's a lot of people I'd like to thank here today. The staff, I think all three leaders in this room will admit the staff was absolutely amazing. Some of them just gave away their holiday week and this past week to ensure that we'd have the materials to do what we're doing here tonight.

Sure, you could say it's a job. It's not just a job. These issues we were debating, the research they did, the endless hours they gave us, we can never thank them enough.

Our Governor and the Representatives from the Newtown area and Senator McKinney that were there that day. I could argue they'll never be the same. That's a life-altering incident.

Senator Williams, Senator Looney, I learned a lot about them over the last few weeks. Very caring individuals.

Mr. Speaker, there were many times within this debate the discussions could have broken down. Your patience, your demeanor kept us at the table, even in the most difficult times. I thank you for that.

Representative Cafero, I've always thought a lot of you. I learned a lot more about you as a person within this process. And there were times, I remember the 7:30 in the morning phone call on a Saturday. There was just, what are we going to do? I can't thank you enough for how much you cared and how many times you might have even bit your lip a couple times just to keep us at the table to see that we come out with a product.

And you're right. It may not be everything that everybody wants. It may not be. I even spoke at one point that maybe if we did have a public hearing and we had to list out who would be pro and who would be con, we'd have everybody at con because not everybody's totally happy, but isn't that a compromise? Isn't that what you strive for when

everybody walks away thinking, I wanted a little bit more. That's a compromise. That's a true compromise.

We'll have more discussions. That's what we do here in this General Assembly. We talk about problems and come up with ways to fix them. This is a real solution.

Throughout the past few months, I think all of us heard the phrase The Connecticut Effect. We heard it from both sides. It wasn't exclusive to one side or the other, but we kept hearing this Connecticut Effect and we thought, what is the Connecticut effect? What does that mean? Is there a definition somewhere?

Well, tonight, 2:20 in the morning, I think we have our definition. I'm going to call it a group of caring and dedicated elected leaders that came together to come up with a comprehensive legislation to hopefully address these issues. That's the definition, and I thank all of you for The Connecticut Effect.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Staff and guests to the Well of the House. Members please take your seats. The machine will be opened.

THE CLERK:

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll.

Please report to the Chamber immediately.

The House of Representatives is voting by Roll on the main measure of the day

SPEAKER SHARKEY.

Have all the Members voted? Have all the Members voted? Will Members please check the board to make sure your vote has been properly cast. If all the Members have voted, the machine will be locked. The Clerk will take a tally

Will the Clerk please announce the.

THE CLERK:

On the Emergency Certified bill, Senate Bill 1160 in concurrence with the Senate

Total Number Voting	149
Necessary for Passage	75
Those voting Yea	105
Those voting Nay	44
Those absent and not voting	2

SPEAKER SHARKEY.

The Emergency Certified bill is passed in concurrence with the Senate.

Representative Aresimowicz.

REP. ARESIMOWICZ (30th)

Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I move for immediate transmittal of Senate Bill 1160 to the Governor.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Motion is for the immediate transmittal of the Emergency Certified bill to the Governor. Is there objection? Is there objection? The motion is approved.

Are there any announcements or points of personal privilege? Representative Noujaim.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Good morning, sir.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Good morning, sir.

REP. NOUJAIM (74th):

Mr. Speaker, let the Journal note that Representative Camillo did miss votes yesterday and today due to illness. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

Thank you, sir. Representative Clemons of the 124th.

REP. CLEMONS (124th):

Mr. Speaker, for a Journal and Transcript notation.

SPEAKER SHARKEY:

JOINT
STANDING
COMMITTEE
HEARINGS

JUDICIARY
PART 13
4200 - 4477

2013

GREG BENSON: Good afternoon.

REP. FOX: Good afternoon.

GREG BENSON: My name is Greg Benson, I'm a Human Rights Advocate for Advocacy Unlimited. I'm here today to testify in support of House Bill 6684, AN ACT CONCERNING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN INTAKE, REFERRAL AND INTERVENTION SYSTEM RELATING TO THE PROVISION AND DELIVERY OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES. I think that this bill is an attempt to do something conceptually different and I want to offer a bit of context for my testimony today.

After the recent tragedy in Newtown, the Connecticut Legislature has taken on the task of addressing what's commonly called mental health treatment. By and large my perception of all the proposed bills and all the debates on TV and the radio, my perception is that most of them can be reduced to this idea that the government in this state can improve mental health, quote, unquote, treatment one of two ways, by increasing forced or coerced access to current treatment or increasing more voluntary access to current treatment.

So I just want to read two points for context and then I'll tell you why I support Bill Number 6684. Individuals who access public mental health services in the United States are on average dying 25 years younger than the general population. This study was released in 2005, and eight years later what the mental health system offers is the most viable treatment when people talk voluntarily or are forced to talk about their lives with mental health professionals is exactly the same. It is impacting exponentially more people.

The database provision in AN ACT CONCERNING GUN

SB1160

VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY, Bill Number 1160, criminalizes what is commonly called mental illness by legalizing state documentation of one's voluntary engagement with the mental health system as evidence that they are unfit to enjoy the same constitutional rights all are entitled to unless given due process or convicted of a crime.

So I think the context of this very unfortunate abridging of civil liberties which was snuck in in the middle of the night in a gun regulation bill, and also the context of the outcomes of what is mental health treatment right now in the United States is important because we need to -- if the Legislature is actually going to try and do anything to make things better, we can't simply have more of the same thing that's really not working.

It certainly doesn't seem logical that we're going to respond to a tragedy or at any time we're going to believe that we'll make our communities safer by putting more people into a system where their quality of life diminishes, they die prematurely, they go on disability, they go to jail, they take their own life.

So this bill, Number 6684, has one provision in particular, in the interest of time I'll bring up that I actually think is a legitimate attempt to do something differently and that's I believe line number 33, number 4, promote expanded access to respite services as an alternative to emergency room and hospital-based services. Particularly in light of this database provision that was put in Bill Number 1160, I think it's important that if people are having a tough time with their experience of life, they have another option in Connecticut other than going into a psych hospital, getting drugged, getting labeled, and having their

Second Amendment right suspended.

For example, if myself or any of you or anyone in this room lost a loved one, didn't sleep for three days, you might start seeing some things that others say aren't there. You really have nowhere to go other than a psych hospital. You'd be put on a database, you wouldn't have the same constitutional rights that everyone is supposed to have unless they are given due process.

REP. FOX: Thanks.

Are there questions or comments?

I don't see any, but thank you for your testimony today.

There's a name Jen who I think went earlier.

Jan VanTassel.

Hello.

JAN VANTESSEL: Good afternoon. My name is Jan VanTassel, I'm the Executive Director of the Connecticut Legal Rights Project or CLRP. CLRP is a statewide nonprofit organization that provides free legal services to low income adults with psychiatric disabilities. And I'm here today to speak in support of Raised Bill 6684. I submitted testimony but want to try to address some of the questions that have been raised by the Committee.

As happens sometimes, the concept of a bill and what comes out from the LCO are not always matching up. So that's some of the issue that is in this bill is the fact that we hadn't really been thinking about when we were brainstorming on this issue the idea of a whole

JOINT
STANDING
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JUDICIARY
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4478 - 4765

2013

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

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Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee

SB 1160

From: Paul J. Knierim
Probate Court Administrator

Re: RB 6684 An Act Concerning the Establishment of an Intake, Referral and Intervention System Relating to the Provision and Delivery of Mental Health Services

Date: April 15, 2013

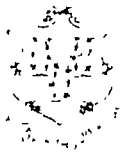
Thank you for the opportunity to testify on RB 6684 An Act Concerning the Establishment of an Intake, Referral and Intervention System Relating to the Provision and Delivery of Mental Health Services.

The Office of the Probate Court Administrator supports the intent underlying section 1(b)(1) of the bill, which provides that staff from the Department of Mental Health and Addition Services attend hearings in Probate Courts to link individuals with mental illness with appropriate services. Such an arrangement would in many cases facilitate the recovery of a psychiatric patient after discharge from the hospital by ensuring that necessary supports are available and by encouraging the patient to take advantage of those services. Ongoing therapy, compliance with prescribed medication, housing, food, medical care, peer support, assistance in obtaining public assistance benefits and coordination among service providers are all critical services.

It is our view that mandating attendance at all commitment hearings would not be an efficient use of resources. Instead, we would recommend a system under

which a department representative would attend a hearing only when the facility that is petitioning for commitment requests assistance in discharge planning or obtaining services for a patient.

We would also point out that the Probate Courts and DMHAS are already engaged in a collaboration known as Melissa's Project, the goals of which align closely with RB 6684. Melissa's Project is a non-profit organization, funded jointly by DMHAS and the Office of the Probate Court Administrator, which provides comprehensive case management services for individuals with severe mental illness living in the community. Individuals served by Melissa's Project achieve better engagement with treatment and, as a direct result, experience marked reductions in revolving door hospitalizations, arrests and incarcerations. We are very pleased that the legislature provided funding to expand this highly effective program to serve additional regions of the state with the passage of the Emergency Certification Bill 1160, An Act Concerning Gun Violence Prevention and Children's Safety.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION SERVICES

A Healthcare Service Agency

DANNEL P MALLOY
GOVERNOR

PATRICIA A REHMER, MSN
COMMISSIONER

Testimony of Patricia A. Rehmer, MSN, Commissioner
Department of Mental Health & Addiction Services
Before the Judiciary Committee
April 15, 2013

Good morning, Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee I am Patricia Rehmer, Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), and I am commenting on three bills that are before you today. **HB 6684** An Act Concerning the Establishment of an Intake, Referral and Intervention System Relating to the Provision and Delivery of Mental Health Services, **S.B. 1165** An Act Concerning Diversionary Programs, and **H.B. 6699** An Act Concerning Pretrial Diversionary Programs and Solicitation of Clients in Criminal Matters While there are positive policy implications for all three of the bills before you, we have some concerns regarding the fiscal and operational issues they present

HB 6684 would direct DMHAS to implement a number of programs that we currently operate in some fashion within our existing budget constraints. The programs outlined in this bill are all recovery oriented and they afford individuals positive interactions with the mental health system They build on our understanding that the relationship between the caregiver and the individual in treatment is a collaborative one that is founded on mutual and thoughtful respect. It is our belief however, that we currently have the authority to operate these programs without legislation and have a solid track record of doing so

We have implemented and evaluated a Housing First Program in New Haven and Hartford with very positive outcomes and will continue to implement this program within available appropriations We have peer support programs and have hired recovery specialists within our state operated and private not for profit service system and we continue to focus on increasing individuals in recovery as a critical component of our workforce We fund the CT Legal Rights Project; one of the advocacy organizations that works with individuals served in our system to develop advance directives We fund the Guardian Ad Litum project to work with individuals served in the Probate Courts in our service system in several areas of the state and currently plan to expand the program statewide due too the passage of SB 1160. Of course we could always do more and would welcome the opportunity to do so but it is very difficult to expand and develop new programs in these difficult fiscal times We are very appreciative of the new dollars in SB 1160 and believe that they will begin to assist us in reaching people who are reluctant to enter the system due to the stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness. For the reasons stated above, the department does not support HB 6648

SB 1165 and HB 6699 both touch upon the current Pretrial Drug Education Program (PDEP) as well as the Pretrial Account which pays for the these diversionary programs as well

as providing funding to the Regional Action Councils and the Governor's Prevention Partnership.

HB 1165 would not alter the operation or the budget of the Pretrial DEP. Section 5 of the bill expands eligibility for the Pretrial Drug Education Program from only using it once to 1) using it more than once if in a prior use the charges were dismissed more than 10 years prior to the current application for the program and 2) allowing it to be used if the defendant already used the Pretrial Community Service Labor Program (currently anyone who used CSLP can't use the Pretrial Drug Education Program at a later time). These changes have been the topic of discussions between DMHAS and the Judicial Branch as it resolves the disparity for repeat violators. We support this change and are pleased that it will have no fiscal impact on the Pretrial Account.

HB 6699 on the other hand does alter the operation of the Pretrial Drug Education Program which would create a significant budget deficit in the Pretrial Account. HB 6699 requires the more expensive of two interventions and expands eligibility for PDEP to persons charged with violation of CGS 21a-279a (illegal possession of small amounts of cannabis-type substances). Expanding the program to include first, second, and third time violators of CGS 21a-279a would create the need for additional funds to pay for the cost of services.

The PDEP is funded by court fees paid by participants and transferred to the Pretrial Account from which DMHAS pays expenses. The surpluses in that account due to fees from our Pretrial Alcohol Education have dried up and as a result the surpluses that supplemented the costs to the Pretrial Drug Education Program are no longer available.

Given the fiscal climate, and the issues we are facing with the funding of the Pretrial Account, we would respectfully ask that you move forward on SB1165 but hold off on the changes suggested in HB 6699 until additional dollars can be allocated to these programs.

We thank you for your time and attention to these matters.

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incorporated by reference in the Senate Journal and the Senate Transcript.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Having adopted the three Agendas, would ask the Clerk to immediately proceed to call the single item appearing on Senate Agenda Number 3, which is Emergency Certified Bill 1160, if the Clerk would please call that item.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

Emergency Certified Bill Number 1160, AN ACT CONCERNING GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY, LCO Number 5428 [sic], introduced by Senator Williams and Representative Sharkey.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I move adoption and passage of the Emergency Certified Bill and seek leave to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

The request is on passage. Will you reply (inaudible).

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I would like to take us back to December 14, 2012. Here at the State Capitol, leaders, Democrats and Republicans, were involved in negotiations concerning the budget of the State of Connecticut. We were working through the morning when word came to us that there had been a shooting at an elementary school in our state. Initially, that's all we knew about it. A little later, we heard that there was a possible fatality, an administrator, perhaps the principal.

We continued our work. We left to go to the press quarters here, where they were having their annual Christmas party and luncheon. As we spoke with reporters, the TV monitors were on in the background. All at once, there was a report that as many as 20 children had been killed, together with a number of teachers and administrators.

For a few seconds, it was hard to breathe. I looked around at my colleagues, as we recoiled at the horror of what we were learning at that moment. The center of the world's attention was Newtown, Connecticut, and the Sandy Hook Elementary School.

I remember thinking this could not be happening in our state. It could not be happening in our country and to our children. Senator McKinney went directly to be with his constituents in Newtown. Later, Governor Malloy joined the parents and the first responders.

At the end of that unimaginable day, we learned that we had lost 20 elementary school children and 6 teachers and administrators. They were killed with a weapon of war, a semi-automatic assault rifle, the platform of which was -- was originally designed for the battlefield and for mass killings. That was 110 days ago.

As we take action today, and as stunned as we are at the events of Newtown, we must also acknowledge this is not the first time in the history of the United States, most importantly the recent history of the United States, that we have confronted horrific gun violence. Think of Columbine High School; a nursing class at a college in Oakland, California; an Amish school, in Pennsylvania; Virginia Tech University; a

shopping mall, in Nebraska; Fort Hood, Texas; a parking lot, in Tucson, where Congresswoman Gabby Giffords was meeting with her constituents; a Sikh temple, in Wisconsin; a Baptist Church, in Fort Worth; a movie theater, in Aurora; and, workplace shootings in every state in America, including a beer distribution center in Manchester, Connecticut, and the Connecticut State Lottery Offices. And those are just a few of the mass killings that receives tremendous attention. Every day in America, children are killed in our cities, without the attendant publicity. Every day in America, urban gun crime claims the lives of tomorrow's Americans.

We are obligated as leaders of this state to do all we can to protect our communities and our children. I remember the father of one of the slain children at Newtown, at a public hearing that we held in Newtown, who reminded us that his child deserved the rights of life, of liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Madam President, the tragedy in Newton demands a powerful response. It demands a response that transcends politics. Today, we have before us legislation that is the culmination of a bipartisan effort in the Connecticut State Legislature. It's the product of a task force of Democrats and Republicans, of public input at an unprecedented four public hearings, and a fifth public hearing conducted by the Public Safety Committee.

This bill addresses gun violence prevention, school security, and mental health services. It is the strongest and most comprehensive bill in the country.

I am going to now recount some of the main points of this bill. Then, Madam President, I will yield to Senators Looney, Harp, Boucher, Bye, and Stillman, for a more detailed review of those provisions of the bill, and then I will accept questions, Madam President.

But at this time I would like to say as to gun violence prevention, the bill includes a first-in-the-nation dangerous weapon offender registry. It requires criminal background checks for the purchase of all firearms. It expands and strengthens

Connecticut's assault weapon ban and requires permits for existing weapons.

It bans the sale or purchase of high-capacity magazines, magazines containing more than ten rounds and requires a declaration of existing magazines. It requires a criminal background check for the purchase of ammunition.

It increases penalties for firearms' trafficking and illegal possession.

It amends the earned risk reduction program to ensure that gun offender felons and other violent criminals serve at least 85 percent of their sentences.

It bans the sale of armor-piercing ammunition.

In terms of mental health issues, it prohibits the possession of a firearm by a person who has been involuntarily committed to a hospital for persons with psychiatric disabilities; it expands the prohibition period from one year to five years. It prohibits the possession of a firearm by a person who is voluntarily committed to a hospital for persons with psychiatric disabilities, and that prohibition period is six months after release.

It requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to work with the Department of Education to provide mental health training for teachers and school employees, that they might catch cases earlier and obtain counseling and programs for our children.

It requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services to create three additional, assertive community treatment programs designed to provide recovery oriented treatment and support services.

It requires the Department of Children and Families to implement a behavioral health consultant program to provide care coordination for primary care providers, that they can turn to experts in the field of mental health as they serve our children.

And it requires the Insurance Department to determine compliance with state and federal mental health parity laws.

As to school security, we are creating a fund so that schools may access the resources necessary to strengthen the -- the security at all of our schools. It also requires that an audit be conducted at our schools to pinpoint any particular safety problems. And it also requires that our teachers and administrators have heightened awareness, and in some cases receive training, so that they can detect issues resulting from behavioral problems or mental health issues and ensure that children get the attention and care that they need.

Madam President, at this time for the discussion of additional details regarding gun violence prevention, I would yield to Senator Marty Looney.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Looney, will you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President; I do.

I wanted to thank Senator Williams for the yield, but in particular I wanted to thank him for his superb leadership in every way leading up to today's vote on this bill. Beginning on that tragic day of December 14th and through every twist and turn of our process leading up to today, his leadership has been magnificent.

It was my great honor to be the Co-chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group, which was part of the -- the Task Force on Gun Violence Prevention, School Security, and Mental Health issues that was set up in January in the wake of the -- the Newtown tragedy.

As Senator Williams said, we had a lengthy pubic hearing of that, of that working group, followed by a second, follow-up hearing. The other working groups also had public hearings. There was a hearing of the

entire task force that was held in -- in Newtown, at Newtown High School, on the evening of -- of January 30th, and in -- in addition to that, another lengthy, marathon hearing in the Public Safety Committee recently so that all of the concepts considered in this bill had been the subject of public comment in public hearings.

Would like to, as Senator Williams said, highlight some of the additional items related to the gun violence prevention section in more -- more detail. Obviously, one of the -- the key components is that now we establish our permitting process to go beyond pistols and revolvers to cover, to cover long guns, also a certificate of eligibility for the, for the possession, the legal possession of ammunition.

One of the great flaws in our law up until now is that someone who was in illegal possession of a gun, because he was a convicted criminal or one of the other reasons for -- for legal disability under our statutes, was able to -- to go in and legally buy ammunition for the gun which he was unable to possess legally. We are closing that loophole in our law with a provision in this, in this current bill. So we have the significant expansion of our, of our permitting and our -- our background checks, which is something that will put us, I think, in a much better position in terms of protecting public safety.

And also, Madam President, clearly there is, there is nothing in this bill that should be seen as -- as improperly infringing upon the rights of legitimate gun owners under either the Second Amendment, either under the Second Amendment of the Constitution or the corresponding provisions of our own, of our own State Constitution.

One of the things I would like to -- to point out is a key provision in this bill is something that a number of us who represent urban areas in the state have been advocating for, for several years, and that is for the establishment of a deadly weapon offender registry. And that is addressed in Sections 18 to 22 of the bill, and it highlights a problem that has been brought to us by many of our police chiefs, especially in urban areas. And that is the fact that in some

cases, violent offenders, those who committed their -- their crimes with -- with deadly weapons, often come out of prison under no supervision at all because they have been, in effect, hard-core offenders who have not been able to earn any -- any reduction in their sentence, serve their maximum time, and come out into our communities, once again, without any additional restriction. So the irony, of course, is that some of these, the people who are the ones in -- in most need of -- of supervision get the least of it.

But under this bill, they will be required to -- to register with the department, with -- with DESPP, Department of Emergency Services and -- and Public Protection for a period of five years and be required to report in annually to their local police department as to their residence and their, and their current status. This is the way, I think, to -- to have these offenders given a cautionary warning by their local police department that where they are is known to the police and that they are, in effect, on a watch list.

This is, in -- in a way, somewhat analogous to the -- the Megan's Law registry for -- for sexual offenders, although this list is not one that would be accessible to the general public but for law enforcement purposes only, so that this is a -- a significant advance, I think, in -- in helping to put additional restrictions on those who have already demonstrated a propensity for violence by conviction of many violent offenses using guns and other weapons; so that is a -- one key section of the, of the bill.

As Senator Williams mentioned, of course, the bill also expands our -- our definition of assault weapons. We first passed an assault weapons ban in 1993, here in Connecticut, a year before the -- the federal ban went into effect, that was in effect for a ten-year period, until it expired.

We are expanding that in -- in this bill and also addressing the issue of -- of large-capacity magazines, as Senator Williams said, that after, on or after January 1, 2014, anyone who possesses a large-capacity magazine obtained before the bill's effective date would be guilty of an infraction punishable by a $90 fine and a class D penalty for any subsequent

offense. So we will have a -- a relation and a prospective prohibition on the purchase of large-capacity magazines under the provisions of -- of this bill. It is a very significant component that there was a great deal of interest in.

As we said, we have an expansive definition of what constitutes an assault weapon, that those who possess them currently would have to register them and -- and banning future purchase of those, of those weapons.

So we have in addition, Madam President, as we said, one of the other things that was requested and that we included in this bill, the Connecticut Police Chiefs Association had asked that we expand our definition of armor-piercing bullets. Under current law, only .50 caliber armor-piercing bullets were prohibited under -- in Connecticut. This bill will expand that definition to include ammunition of other calibers, other than .50 caliber, that are designated as "armor-piercing bullets." This has been, again, at the request of our police departments around the state.

In addition, Madam President, while current law allows for the -- the seizure of weapons that police officers under limited circumstances can secure warrants to seize guns from anyone who poses an imminent risk of injuring himself or herself or someone else or has a -- a criminal conviction or restraining order against that person, the bill expands that legal-seizure provision to also include ammunition, as it could, because as we all know, without the ammunition, a gun is only a club. And so the -- the bill confronts -- conforms the law to current practice, by allowing an ammunition seizure by the police as well.

We also provide an expansion in funding for the state-wide trafficking task force, and another very significant section of the bill. Throughout the bill, we have in Sections 42 to 43, 46 to 50, and 52 and 53, increased criminal penalties for gun trafficking and other gun-related offenses, a very important provision of the bill, that many of these crimes that previously were perhaps class D felonies are now being raised to class C felonies or class C felonies being raised to class B felonies, and also establishing substantial fines, as well, for people who have the capacity and

financial resources to pay a fine. And the fines will be required unless the court makes a specific finding on the record to remit or reduce the fine and find inability to pay.

So, for instance, the crime of trafficking in firearms, under Section 53-202 of our statutes, that currently is a class C felony if the transfer is less than five firearms, that are class B felony, if more than five firearms. Now we make it a class B felony for all and also creating a minimum mandatory three-year prison term and a $10,000 fine.

The crime of stealing a firearm, which currently is a class D felony is going to be elevated to a class C felony, with a mandatory minimum two-year prison term and a $5000 fine.

The -- the crime of transferring a pistol or revolver to a prohibited person or violating transfer procedures, which is currently a class D felony, will be elevated to a class C felony, with a mandatory minimum two-year prisons term and $5000 fine.

And then the crime of transferring a pistol or revolver to a prohibited person or violating transfer procedures knowing the transferred weapon is stolen or has an altered identification mark, which is currently a class B felony, will continue to be a class B felony but now will also have with it a mandatory three-year prison term and $10,000 fine.

So one of the -- the areas of concern in this bill was that we also needed to try to find ways to address urban crime, which is also often committed with -- with handguns and illegally transferred handguns through straw purchasers and other things. And those concerns are addressed in this bill as well. So we have the -- the crime of an ineligible person soliciting a firearm through a straw man, which is currently a class B misdemeanor. That is be -- going to be elevated to a class D felony in this bill, with a mandatory minimum one-year prison term and a $3000 fine. An ineligible person obtaining a firearm from a straw man, class -- it will now be a class C felony.

So we have, throughout our criminal penalty statutes, enhanced penalties and mandatory provisions added to this bill that did not exist previously. So there, this is almost every element of gun-related crimes for possession or sale has an enhanced penalty under this bill.

Another provision, Madam President, that's an expansion upon existing law, is the safe-storage requirement. Under our law currently we have a provision that anyone who is in legal possession of a weapon but is in a household where there is someone under the age of 16 has to have the safe-storage provisions in our law that the weapons be kept secured and under lock and key. We are expanding that under this bill in two ways.

First of all, the -- the safe-storage requirement will be imposed on people who if they know or should know that a resident of the premises, one, is ineligible to possess the firearms under state or federal law; so, for instance, anyone, if anyone in the household has any legal disability because of a prior criminal conviction or -- or mental health commitment, that would also impose the safe-storage requirement rather than just the age requirement under current law.

And, also, anyone who poses a risk of imminent personal injury to himself -- himself or others, if that is known by the, by the owner, that also would invoke the safe-storage requirement, so that's also a significant expansion of our, of our existing law.

So there are -- we also in the bill make a -- a couple of changes to the Board of Firearm Permit Examiners, expand that board from seven to nine by adding one, retired, Superior Court judge to be appointed by the Chief Court Administrator and Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services' nominee to be appointed by the, by the Governor.

In addition, Madam President, we have a -- a provision that will prevent forum shopping for -- for pistol permits, by requiring that someone who is seeking a permit would only be to -- able to file one application per year and also would only be able to file in the town of residence rather than in the town

where someone is employed. And we have seen some cases where people tried to perhaps forum shop, in that category. They will no longer be able to do that.

So there are a number of provisions, Madam President, that -- that address the concern about -- about excessively dangerous weapons but also, as we said, enhancing penalties, where penalties exist under -- under current law, and trying to address the -- the concerns that arose in the wake of the terrible tragedy in Newtown but also the concerns that have existed in many of our urban areas for so many years.

So I am pleased to support this bill and all of its particulars, Madam President and would, at this point, yield to Senator Toni Harp to address the -- the mental health components of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Harp, will you accept the yield?

SENATOR HARP:

Yes, I will. Thank you, very much --

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

SENATOR HARP:

-- Madam President.

I, too, want to thank Senator Williams for his leadership in this issue, and I also want to thank him for appointing me Co-chair of the Mental Health Working Group. And I'm going to thank a -- a hunch of people, because this is really the first time that we have worked in a bipartisan way. So, with that, I want to thank Senator McKinney as well.

I want to thank my Co-chair, Representative Terrie Wood; she was a joy to work with. I also want to

thank the members of the Bipartisan Mental Health Working Group. The Mental Health Working Group had one of the best-attended -- by Legislators -- public hearings this year. All members stayed throughout the over-12-hour hearing. I want to thank them for their participation throughout this process.

I also want to thank caucus staff members who helped our working group, Ellen Scalettar, Katie Duggan, Mary Cyriac, Cara Passaro, Michael Goodwine, and Jason Stark.

This part of the bill requires the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, in consultation with the State Department of Education, to administer a mental health first aid training program that teaches educators and related staff to recognize the signs of mental disorders in children and young adults and helps them connect those children and young adults needing services to services.

Mental health's first aid is an established, evidence-based approach that has proved to be effective in helping participants learn to recognize and respond to individuals showing signs of mental illness. The bill creates a task force to conduct a comprehensive study of Connecticut's mental health delivery system, with a special focus on vulnerable 16 through 25-year-olds in our population.

The research topics include early intervention, the mental health work force, mental health professional's reporting responsibilities, intervention services available in our state and provided in our schools, behavioral health screening, involuntary outpatient commitment, and reducing mental health stigma, among other things. The behavioral health task force is charged to report to the General Assembly by February 1, 2014.

The bill also expands the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services assertive community treatment program to three additional locations. The assertive community treatment program or "ACT teams," as they are called, are mobile, multi-disciplinary teams that provide recovery oriented treatment and support to those who have severe and persistent mental illness.

The bill adds, as well, more case management and coordination slots to assist people with mental illness who are involved with the probate system. And we heard from a program called "Melissa's Project" which is currently in the state, that we hope will be expanded through this authorization.

As well, the bill establishes an access mental health program, modelled after the Massachusetts Child Psychiatry Access Project and similar programs in 26 other states. The program will provide training, support, and professional consultations for pediatricians to help them intervene with children who have a mental health condition.

The bill also makes various changes to insurance statutes to improve the operation of the state's mental health parity statute, based upon the recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee. This legislation responds to concerns that patients with mental health and substance abuse treatment needs have faced barriers when attempting to utilize private health insurance to access needed services. In some cases, the costs of these uncovered treatments are borne by the state, either through the Department of Children and Families voluntary Behavioral Health Services for children program or through the Department of Mental Health -- Department of Mental Health Services for the services that they provide to adults.

There has also been confusion about the rationale behind the carriers' decisions about what services are medically necessary. These provisions seek to increase transparency and consistency in that decision-making process.

And with that, I urge adoption, Madam President, but yield to Senator Boucher.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher, will you accept the yield, ma'am?

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Yes. Thank you, very much, Madam President.

Madam President, when a child is sent to school, their parents expect them to be safe. The Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting rampage was a parent's, school system and community, and the nation's worst nightmare. Newtown teachers, first responders, town leaders, first selectwoman, and the community response was heroic, and we couldn't be more prouder of them.

I also would like to take this opportunity to thank my Co-chair from the House, Representative Fleischmann, and the wonderful members of the committee, who many were Chairs of various relevant committees of the Legislature in their own right and added valuable expertise and consensus recommendations to the task force.

On behalf of the very conscientious and hardworking, Bipartisan School Security and Safety Subcommittee members, we thank the staff and the over 200 individuals that supplied written testimony and over the 100 individuals who testified in person on this very critical issue.

To guide our consensus recommendations, the School Security Working Group held two informational forums. The first included the Connecticut Association of School Superintendents; CAS, the Connecticut Association of Schools; Connecticut Association of School Business Officers; the State Department of Education commissioner; the Police Chiefs Association; Fire Chiefs Association; the Board of Regents; the UConn Security Police chief, who was very instrumental in more than one meeting, I might add; the CEA; the AFT; the Connecticut Association of School Administrators; the Connecticut Association of School Psychologists; CCM; and the -- also, COST.

The second meeting that we had included two recognized threat assessment and forensic psychology experts, as well as an additional meeting with state police, the State Department of Education school construction personnel, and SROs.

Our public hearings, as I have just mentioned a minute ago, had a hundred in-person testimony and over 222

written testimonies, and we participated also in another meeting where we all met together as combined subcommittees in Newtown, itself.

It's very important to note that the committee was able to proceed expeditiously and with great efficiency in consensus, by taking two very controversial proposals off the table; the first, not creating costly mandates for our towns and cities by requiring either ratios or quotas for added personnel; the second, not arming or training teachers for school shootouts, as 80 to 90 percent of all stakeholders that contacted us, that provided testimony, opposed this action as well as our law enforcement community.

It was believed that the potential for collateral damage is too risky when the safety of children and staff is at stake. In fact, there was general consensus, even, that school security guards or armed SROs should also be POST-Certified, and I think that came across in some of the material we provided.

As far as our school security and safety plans, in our first meeting we reviewed current law regarding school safety, and what we learned is that there is no real, current, specific state statute that requires school boards to establish an emergency management plan. While we do not think that yet we have the final police report on this particular tragedy, it is pretty safe to assume that the emergency policies and procedures that were employed by the brave staff and students at Sandy Hook saved lives. We wanted to ensure that not only do we require that every school have a school safety and security plan but that we should give municipalities the guidance and tools necessary to develop and implement these plans.

It was also of prime concern to our school communities that came before us and asked for guidance and best practices so that they can use them as they develop their own, local procedures. And they asked for this assistance. Section 86 of the bill requires our DESPP or Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection, along with the Department of Education to develop standard and state-wide school security and safety plans.

There are currently some really great plans that are being utilized by schools in Connecticut and in different municipalities, Westport being one that it was often cited as a good model. We wanted to give, however, the communities flexibility to develop and implement their own plans but also have state-wide standards that had to be met.

The standards developed by DESPP and the State Department of Education must include some of the following, as recommended by our working group: An all-hazards approach; the involvement of local officials, including the chief executive officer of the municipality; the superintendent of schools; law enforcement; fire; public health; emergency management, and emergency medical services; a command center organizational standard; a requirement that a School Security and Safety Committee be established at each school; crisis management procedures; a requirement that local law enforcement and other local safety officials evaluate, score, and provide feedback on fire drills and crisis response drills and annually submit this report to the DESPP regarding such fire drills and crisis response drills; procedures for managing various types of emergencies, because as we all know, there are many others, and that's why an all-hazards approach was recommended strongly; a requirement that each local and regional board of education conduct a security and vulnerability assessment for each school under the jurisdiction of such board, every two years, and develop a school security and safety plan for each such school; a requirement that the school's Safe Climate Committee, which is the bullying committee, collect and evaluate information relating to the incidences of disturbing and threatening behavior that may not meet the current definition of bullying; a requirement that school security and safety plan for each school provide an orientation on such school security and safety plan to each school employee at such school and provide violence prevention training in a manner prescribed in such school security and safety plan.

Now, under this bill, the DESPP and the State Department of Education must develop these standards, by next January. In researching these issues nationwide, we found many states with excellent school

safety programs, so it is our hope that our agencies don't try to reinvent the wheel but rather use existing or proven records and methods.

Section 87 -- 87 of the bill requires local and regional boards of education to develop and implement a school security and safety plan based on the new standards being provided, by July 2014. And they should review and submit these plans on an annual basis.

Section 87 also will -- requires the establishment of a School Safety and Security Committee at each school to assist in the development of safety and security plans. The committee must include in those particular committees a local police officer, a first responder, a teacher and administrator employed at the school, and a mental health professional. The board of education has the ability to name others to this particular group if they wish, such as, perhaps, a custodian or a paraprofessional. We all know the custodians know everything about the school, for sure.

The subcommittee heard compelling testimony regarding the free flow of information on potentially disturbing behavior in schools. Experts told us that following a school shooting, in interviewing those who had contact with the shooter prior to the incident, many had information that, when seen in isolation may not have seen like a problem at first, but when taken together, may have given a clue as to the mental state of the individual.

Maybe a student drew something disturbing in art class or wrote a disturbing essay in English or perhaps withdrew from sports or other extracurricular activities. We need a mechanism for someone to connect all the dots and evaluate and report this information. The bill utilizes an already existing model, as was mentioned, to accomplish this goal, as the school Safe Climate Committee, which is Connecticut's bullying statute.

Under this bill, this committee would be the repository of disturbing and threatening behaviors that do not meet the already established definition of bullying. The idea is not to investigate every

instance of disturbing and threatening behavior, rather to look at the information in total and report as necessary to the district school safe school climate coordinator and the School Security and Safety Committee.

In Section 90, we require Mental Health and Addiction Services, with the State Department of Education, to administer a mental health first aid training program and require the district -- a district-wide safe school climate coordinator to participate in this particular program.

Of course, on everybody's mind right at first is infrastructure, the infrastructure of a school. The subcommittee discussed this physical infrastructure and received valuable, very valuable public testimony on methods to harden our schools without making them prisons. It is very important to maintain a proper learning environment while balancing safety, and that was heard time and again.

In Section 80 of the bill, we establish a School Safety Infrastructure Council consisting of experts in school and buildings security. The council must develop school building safety standards, by next January.

In the bill, we ask the council to develop standards based on some of the recommendations we learned through the subcommittee process including: Entryways to school buildings and classrooms, such as reenforcement of entry ways' ballistic glass, solid-core doors -- that was mentioned time and again as the most effective and least costly -- double-door access; computer-controlled electronic locks; remote locks on all entrances and exists; and a buzzer system; the use of cameras throughout the school building and all entrances and exits, including the use of close-circuit television monitoring; penetration-resistance vestibules; and, other security infrastructure improvements and devices as they become industry standards.

After January 2014, all new school construction projects must comply with these standards, which will be reimbursable through the regular school

construction process, and these requirements are contained in Sections 81 through 82 of the bill.

But we didn't want to wait until 2014 to assist our municipalities with the expense of school security infrastructure, so in Section 84, you'll find that we resurrected the 2007, school security competitive grant program to reimburse towns for certain expenses incurred in the development and the improvement of school security.

The DESPP, along with Construction Services, and the State Department of Ed, will jointly administer this program, and towns are eligible for a grant percentage equal to the same percentage used in our school construction process. Once the program is up and running, funds should be made available immediately, if anyone asks about that in your local community in Section 85, we authorize bonds in the amount of 15 million for this particular competitive grant.

I'm going to end with the area of higher education. While the subcommittee on school security focused on K-12, and most of this bill does deal with that, we believe that a safety component for our colleges and universities should be raised and was raised by the Higher Education Committee for a public hearing, as the leadership of this committee were also represented on our subcommittee.

And in yielding to the distinguished Chairwoman of the Higher Education Committee, Senator Bye, who will proceed to outline the -- the content of this portion of the bill, I wanted to end with -- by saying that it was truly a privilege to serve as your Co-chair on the School Security Subcommittee and very proud to report that our recommendations were developed in a bipartisan and fully consensus manner. The members of this committee were grateful to see that the school security language contained in this bill substantially matches the spirit of the subcommittee recommendations.

And I would also like to thank, very much, the President of our Senate, Senator Williams; Majority Leader, Senator Looney; Minority Leader, John McKinney, who's a great mentor and a wonderful friend

to all of us on our side of the aisle; and, also, to Speaker Sharkey, for their guidance and leadership throughout this very difficult but very vital process.

Thank you, very much. And I yield, again, to my wonderful Co-chair, Senator Bye.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Bye, will you accept the yield, ma'am?

SENATOR BYE:

Yes. Thank you, Madam President.

And through you, Madam President, thank you, Senator Boucher for that summary of the school safety. And I just want to join you, while you've just finished in thanking our leaders for their work on this bill and their incredible leadership. I think it's a very proud day for the state, and your leadership made that happen. And you were also very supportive of our subcommittee work, as Senator Boucher said.

Let me start, as many have, by thanking Senator Boucher, who's always there on Higher Ed asking tough questions and pushing important policies and making policies better, also, our -- our House Ranking Member, Representative LeGeyt, was very helpful with this bill and my Co-chair, Representative Willis, has such a deep understanding of higher education and our system in Connecticut, and that helped this process as well.

I'm sure that members of this body know that, as Senator Williams referenced, there have been mass shootings on campuses. Our campuses house adolescents and we all know that a lot of times when people have mental health challenges, it's that early adolescence when that happens. And so we really believed that a part of this education security provisions and safety should be extended to higher education, and we worked with the Education Co-chairs, Senator Boucher, and Representative Fleischmann to develop these, but it was a very collaborative process.

And I must thank the police officers at our CSUs, community colleges, and UConn, who are such a source of knowledge and understanding about adolescents and about what their campuses need to make sure that our students are safe on those campuses. And our independent colleges were also a part of this work and real team players.

So the higher education portion of this bill asks that state and independent colleges submit a security plan to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection. One thing that Sandy Hook showed us is how important it is that everybody understands, if you will, the lay of the land. And it's important to have a state and a local component, and so this bill will have those plans for all our public and private colleges.

It also requires a security and vulnerability assessment of campuses every two years, and each campus will be required to develop a threat assessment team that brings in input from many different sources. It also requires a board of regents for higher education to study the creation of a police department at our community colleges and when that might be appropriate.

We all remember, just several weeks ago, the scare that happened on Manchester Community College campus. Senator Cassano has been a real champion for doing this study and having a set of policies about police officers on campus.

It also requires that there are security audits of the state universities and community colleges, that are performed by the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection.

That summarizes the broad points, Madam President. I'll be happy to entertain questions, but at this point I would like to yield to the fabulous Co-chair of the Education Committee, Representative [sic] Stillman.

THE CHAIR:

Representative Stillman, will you accept --

A VOICE:

No, it's Senator.

SENATOR BYE:

Senator Stillman.

THE CHAIR:

What are you doing to me? Senator Stillman, will you accept the yield, please?

SENATOR STILLMAN:

Yes, thank you, Madam President, I do accept the yield.

And thank you, Senator Bye, for that lovely introduction; I appreciate it.

I -- I, too, as -- as a member of the School Security Subcommittee and -- and a member of the task force, itself, was honored to play a role in developing policy, a new policy for the state; specifically in my, in my role as the Senate Chair of the Education Committee, that was really my focus. And I want to thank Senator Boucher for her leadership on that subcommittee and for her very clear and synopsis of what is in this particular bill in reference to school security and outlining the steps that it took to develop these policies that are in front of us today.

I, too, would like to thank Senator Williams and Senator Looney for their leadership, and Senator McKinney on -- in terms of make -- continuing to make this a true bipartisan bill and a bipartisan effort to address an issue in the state which was -- was so overwhelming for so many of us, as we wrapped -- grappled with the events that happened at the Sandy Hook School.

You know, for the parents and families that send their children to school every day, this was a real wake up call for them, in terms of the fact that, as parents and members of families who -- who send our children

to schools, there's that very long day that we -- we are not in control of our children's activities and we rely on our schools to keep our children safe and secure and -- and feel comfortable in their respective school settings. And it's so for those reasons we really did need to address enhanced safety measures at our schools.

And Senator Boucher did, as I said, a very good job outlining the concerns that were raised and what do we do about it. I -- I will tell you that the subcommittee, itself, worked very hard, and all the members of the subcommittee, I -- I thank them, actually members of every single subcommittee, for the extra hours that they put in, in this Legislative Session to craft a bill that is before us today.

You know, I think it's important to remember, though, that even though the state is going to develop some standards through the new School Safety Infrastructure Council, that these will still be standards that when they are developed will be an opportunity for our schools to determine if they are appropriate for their -- their school buildings. This bill really focused more on the infrastructure, as -- as opposed to some other issues that came before us that many felt were more appropriate to the Mental Health Subcommittee. And I -- I thank them for addressing some of the concerns that were raised in our subcommittee.

One thing that we established when the bullying bill was passed, a couple of years ago, were the Safe School Climate Committees. And I think the fact that we had put that in place really allowed us to enhance their value in our schools. And that's what these recommendations are doing; that's another part of the recommendations, to enhance how this -- those School Safety Climate Committees, who are dealing, some of them with bullying issues -- can also be a new resource, a new opportunity, too, for people, for kids, especially in the schools or for teachers to go and have someone to talk to and say, You know, I'm concerned about what I saw or I'm concerned about a certain child; I'd like to bring it to your attention or -- or I don't like what I heard.

And so I -- I think the fact that we had advanced such a comprehensive school bullying bill, I -- is really helpful to this process as we make our schools even more safe and secure. And so when we do send our children to school every day, we can, we can feel as though they are in -- in the safe place that we've always hoped they -- they would be in every single day, because if they don't, if the children don't feel safe in their schools, they're not going to learn. And the teachers aren't going to be able to teach as -- as well as they do, so it's, so I'm very pleased that the provisions are in this bill.

And, again, I want to thank the leadership for leading us to this point of a comprehensive bill on a bipartisan basis, one that I'm proud to support and certainly hope that my colleagues here in the Circle will do the same. I believe that this bill is a great opportunity for Connecticut to set a framework for other states to follow.

And with that, I will, if I may, Madam President, I would like to yield back to Senator Williams.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams, will you accept the yield, sir?

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President. Yes, I accept the yield.

I, too, would like the thank my fellow Senators, particularly those who just spoke, Senator looney, Senator Harp, Senator Boucher, Senator Bye, Senator Stillman. I also want to thank all of the Senators and Representatives who served on the Bipartisan Task Force addressing Gun Violence and Children's Safety. And, in particular, Speaker Sharkey; Minority Leader in the House, Larry Cafero; but, especially my friend and colleague, Minority Senate Leader John McKinney, all have provided tremendous leadership on this issue.

And, Madam President, as a process clarification, I do want to underscore the fact that Connecticut is doing something that no other state has done. It's addressing this issue not in a partisan way, not in a

political way, but in a bipartisan way with Democrats and Republicans working together. After the tragedy in Newtown, I -- I spoke with Senator McKinney; I spoke with Speaker Sharkey, and we decided to approach it in that way. We have been criticized by folks on both sides for that approach, but we have done something fundamentally different in the State of Connecticut. And the legislation that is before us is a better product for it.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark?

Senator Kissel.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you, very much, Madam President.

December 14, 2012, for our family, was holiday time. It's a Friday. Many of us who have children drove them to school, kissed them good-bye. My friends and colleagues here in the Circle are well aware that I have two sons that I am extremely proud of, my son Nathaniel, who's 17, but my little guy, Tristan, who just happens to be born on December 15th. So on that Friday, not only was our family looking forward to the Christmas holidays but we were very much looking forward to that Saturday when we would celebrate Tristan's 9th birthday.

And as I drove home that Friday and listened to all the accounts on the radio and was completely overwhelmed that what I saw at the beginning of day, while physically it had not changed, emotionally it had clanged because of the events that we were being told had enfolded in Newtown. There was a pall not only over Connecticut but our entire nation and to those that were following the story from throughout the world.

And when I got home, my little guy was there, and as all moms and dads did that night and probably have reassured themselves to do every day, is I gave Tristan in particular a hug and a kiss. And I said, Did you know what happened today? And he did. Not in any great detail, but they had explained it at his school. And we went over and we chatted a little bit. Was he afraid? And he actually wasn't.

He actually confided that he was more disturbed by the fact of what took place in Colorado, because as a little 9-year-old or 8-year-old, going on 9, he was a huge Dark Knight, Batman fan. And it's almost as if he understood that there weren't -- might be rigors in a school environment, but a movie theater, that's where magic was supposed to happen. You're supposed to be safe and transported into a different world. Wow. So I would acknowledge that these events do have an impact on us as well as our children. And to the extent we make efforts to try to stop these events, those efforts are worthwhile.

We had an enormously long public hearing on the 28th of January; I've had longer in Judiciary, when we would start at ten and end at quarter-to-three. We had panels in the morning, and the public didn't begin testifying until one. But, again, it was one of those marathon hearings where we didn't end until about quarter-to-three.

And then on that Wednesday, everybody who was honored enough to serve on the General Task Force was invited to go to Newtown High School, and it was an unusually warm January 30th, but still overcast. And I arrived in Newtown, a town I had passed through probably dozens of times but hadn't really spent an awful lot of time in the town. And our hearing was to begin at six, and I got there an hour early, and I and I just wanted to drive around and get a feel for the community. And I drove by the front of Sandy Hook Elementary School and saw probably four cones blocking the entrance, and where that fire department is. And clearly no one was going down that -- that roadway.

I just wanted to drive around the neighborhood, and I saw houses with -- with tributes on their front of their houses. And I just sort of followed the roads,

and I followed a road up a hill. And lo and behold, to my right I saw a beautiful park, and I just decided to go in there. And there was only one vehicle in there; it was a commercial trucker, just finishing up his paperwork. And as I parked, he drove out, and now I'm in a park up on a hill in Newtown, in the Sandy Hook section of town, just looking about, trying to get a feel for that community.

I think the school is close to that park. I got a sense that that was the case. It was a beautiful park; it still is. I haven't been back to Newtown since that day, January 30th, but I remember walking. There was an area, pool area, soccer fields, picnic pavilion, and up near the edge of a hill, that little playscape area where you know little kindergartners and first-graders and second-graders would like to play.

And I walked near that area. And in that park it sort of falls down, and there's deep woods and paths. And it was too muddy to -- to even travel down there, but I had a sense that near that park was that school. And I almost had a sense that perhaps some of the souls of those little children, administrators, and teachers -- I like to believe that one goes up to Heaven -- but if they were going to come down as angels and visit, that would be familiar territory and friendly territory, a happy memory.

What do those moms and dads feel? They testified before us on that Monday. They came to Newtown High School and testified again. I have told my constituents, I said, as a dad, if that happened to my children, I don't know what I would fight for or not fight for, because to lose a child before yourself and to lose a child in that kind of situation has got to be every parent's worse nightmare.

So I spent a good half-hour in that park, just trying to get a sense of where I was, wondering if maybe down that hill, in those woods was that school. But I wanted to be up where the playscape was, trying to hope that there were still some of those good sentiments. And before I left, a young woman with an English accent -- I don't know if she was the mom or the nanny -- but two little kids on little bikes with

little training wheels, and it was nice. They were just -- I mean, when in January 30th do you get to go to a park? And they got to go to a park.

And I go, lucky day for these guys. And she goes, yes. I go, what's the name of this park? And -- and I thought she said "Dreadwell," and that seemed sort of -- she goes, "No, Treadwell" -- maybe that was a Freudian slip. But that was the park. That was the place. I will always remember that place because I think there's something special there. There's something special in that community, and they will struggle with this for the rest of their lives, but to the parents and the first responders and everybody that came and testified, I have got to give them huge respect.

Now, very briefly, I want to bring you back 30-odd years to when I was a student, an undergrad student, at the University of Connecticut, and it was a beautiful, late-September, early-October day. It was a Saturday or Sunday and I just decided to -- I was a freshman -- I wanted to explore the territory. I didn't, you know, you know where you are. You have your dorm; it was the Northwest Quadrangle. I wanted to take a walk, and it may have been North Eagle Hill Road -- I'm not exactly sure -- but I walked by myself, just enjoying the autumn leaves. And I stumbled upon what could only be a colonial graveyard, and I read some of the tombstones over on the right-hand side. And they were really incredible, and I actually wrote, wanted to write one down, use it for myself.

Sort of being a little -- and I wouldn't -- necessarily adventurous, but I like to explore, I walked into this colonial graveyard that didn't really have a formal gate opening or anything; it was just tucked away from the woods, and I went to the back of it. And I was startled by what I saw -- 18-year-old kid, new to a territory, a State of Connecticut -- and over in the distance I saw something that was so strange, it was like out of a movie.

And it was a set of buildings, stark, and someone was in a caged area with someone standing not too far away, maybe holding a baton or holding the keys to

the, to the caged area. And this person was, like, just kept, like, shaking spiders off themselves or something like that; it was, it was very odd. I couldn't actually, I mean, part of it is you watch that and then you skedaddle out of there as fast as you humanly can.

Well, turns out, lo and behold, I had stumbled into one of the back areas of Mansfield Training School, and back in those days, people with severe mental illness were housed in these institutions. And folks got it in their heads that, you know what, this is not a humane way to treat people with mental disabilities.

And so we went about as a society in the last 30 years or so deinstitutionalizing individuals, and those that are severely disabled, we still make sure have appropriate housing and care. But for so many with mental disabilities, there is not the appropriate medical attention. There is not the appropriate housing. There is not the appropriate care as a society, whether they are new Veterans returning back from war, whether they are the homeless, whether they are young people spotted in schools, even at the earliest ages, we don't do a good job in that area.

We did a good job letting folks out of the institutional climate, but we haven't really done the other part of it. And there are good things in this bill regarding mental health parity, the recommendations of the Program Review and Investigations Committee. In fact, in the bill that we have before us, there's a lot of good things.

But then I get to my other point, because we had the litany of experiences that people have pointed to and said look at this horrific event and look at that honorific event. And I say look at it in the totality of circumstances in our country. And while in many instances guns are involved, the thing that I see as the common thread is the mental health issue. And while the bill before us this afternoon touches that and creates a task force to study it further and is very ambitious in its laudable goals, to my mind, that's where we need to look first.

And, unfortunately, what I have seen over the years, whether one disagrees with me or agrees with me, is that we turn to guns first. It's like that movie "Casablanca," where the French police chief goes, bring in the usual suspects. Well, anybody involved in law enforcement knows you match the evidence to the suspect; you don't bring in the usual suspects.

There are people that will be against certain guns, no matter what. I do not state that any of my colleagues whom I care for in the Circle feel that way, but there are folks out there that have no use for the Second Amendment, whatsoever. And so the first thing they look to is how do we regulate guns even further; how do we regulate ammunition? How do we make it more difficult?

And I say that's okay to discuss; it's worthwhile. We owe it to the parents and the loved ones and the sisters and the brothers and the husbands, the moms and the dads, we owe them that discussion. But at the end of the day, making it more onerous, more cumbersome, more burdensome on law-abiding citizens in our state is not the solution.

Please don't. Please don't.

THE CHAIR:

Excuse me, Senator.

SENATOR KISSEL:

You -- you --

THE CHAIR:

Excuse --

SENATOR KISSEL:

You are --

THE CHAIR:

-- me, Senate -- Senator --

SENATOR KISSEL:

You are not --

THE CHAIR:

Excuse me.

SENATOR KISSEL:

-- helping my argument.

THE CHAIR:

Excuse me, a minute, Senator.

Ladies and gentlemen, I asked before, I ask you again, please hold your applause or your boos. This is not the time. I have been told and asked by the -- the state police, the Capitol Police to -- if you continue this, they are going to remove you. I ask you not to do that, because we really do think you should be in this Chamber.

Thank you, very much --

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank --

THE CHAIR:

-- Senator.

SENATOR KISSEL:

Thank you, Madam President.

And it's not an easy decision. I can tell you right here and right now, I didn't sleep at all Monday night because I had the images of little kids in my face, in my dreams, the 20, little, first-year, first-graders.

So I have my public policy views. I have what I believe in, that I've stood for, for over 20 years. But I will say this to everyone in the State of Connecticut, this is not an easy vote for any of us.

If any one of us had the magic solution, we would be done. Nothing could make me happier than if this bill solved all of these issues. But in my heart of hearts, I don't believe that to be the case.

I respect those that brought this bill before us. I can state unequivocally that if it were not for Senator McKinney, Representative Cafero, and others in that room negotiating this bill, it would be far more onerous on law-abiding gun owners, hunters, sportsmen, competitors, those that just want to collect firearms. But at the end of the day, I have to weigh all the good things -- and there's lots of good things in here -- versus those steps that I feel that go too far in maybe not necessarily demonizing law-abiding gun owners but making their lives much more difficult.

Some people have said have you changed your position, because you've got the bill here and you're going through it. This isn't the bill. This isn't the bill. This is five years old, District of Columbia v. Heller; this is the United States Supreme Court decision, that finally was handed down, that stated succinctly that that prefatory clause in the Second Amendment does not limit the substantive clause that people have a right to bear arms. And you don't have a right to bear arms in the United States because you need to join a militia; you have a right to bear arms because you can protect yourself. That has been the multi-centuries' history of folks blazing a way through the wilderness and protecting themselves through all sort of hazards in the United States.

I have heard there will be legal challenges to the bill before us this afternoon. I do not know if this will be grounds to overturn any of the portions in the bill before us, but I will say this -- and I will conclude with these sentiments -- our founding fathers knew exactly what they were doing.

And I stumbled upon something in the last couple of months, purely be chance -- hard winter, cold -- cold now -- it's April; it's cold -- I was listening to an audio book, going to and from work, to and for -- from session, sometimes just taking half-hour walks in my neighborhood, just trying to get out of that house, because it's winter and you get cabin fever. And the

book I selected, a long one, was the Biography of John Adams. I was fascinated. I'm a New Englander; he's a New Englander. I always thought he got a little short shrift, being boxed in between Washington and Jefferson, and it was fascinating. My love and respect for that man, that president, went up astronomically with the rendition of his story of his life.

One of the things I liked the most is he doesn't view life as a ladder, where you're trying to always get ahead; he viewed it as a journey, where you need to try to learn something all along the way. But buried in there, as I'm listening, six, seven, eight weeks ago, on March 14, 1776, the Continental Congress -- not the bad guys, the good guys -- as they voted on all issues at that time, knowing that they were about to go to war with Britain, in revolution -- obviously behind closed doors, because you don't want to be accused of defying your nation -- on March 14, 1776, they voted to take away all the firearms of every Colonial citizen that was leaning towards or supportive of the British, any Tory, approximately one-third of the colonists. They don't teach us that in school, but that's what they voted on. John Adams, Ben Franklin, our heroes. They knew war was on the horizon and they said, well, better get the guns away from these folks so that we don't have to watch behind our back as we're fighting the British in front of us.

Well, doesn't then it make sense, they knew how powerful a weapon that was, that later on, as the Constitution is being formed and they amend the Constitution, right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. That makes sense, because guess what? Most of those folks were the same. They were certainly informed about the same events. And they said to themselves, wow, we were able to go do that. Granted it was the anticipation of war, but you know what? We got to make sure that never happens to us. So going forward, we're going to make sure that we have that right so that never can happen to us, because we -- that's a scary thing.

Is it something legitimate that I'm concerned about happening a year from now or two years from now or three years from now? I don't know. I would not

suspect it to be so. But for those individuals that are concerned about their Second Amendment rights, incrementalism is a real concern. And having all the information in one area is a real concern, because while this year people are grandfathered, there clearly are individuals that would not go that far and would say, you know what, these magazines should be gone now. And you know what? We're not going to compensate you for them. And you know what? These hundred guns should be gone now. And you know what? We're not going to compensate you for them, and if you don't like us, like it, sue us.

And then maybe the Supreme Court would decide it five or six or seven years down the line, because my constituents in north-central Connecticut and many other places that I've heard from understand incrementalism. They understand big government. They have a slight suspicion. Oh, you only want to go this far today but tomorrow you might go a little farther. And I can't blame them for that concern when I hear that we have this great compromise in the bill -- the bill before you -- but at the same time both Governor Malloy and advocates for further gun control say it doesn't go far enough but it's -- it's a good first step.

How can I turn to my constituents that are concerned about incrementalism and losing their Second Amendment rights? How can I turn to them and say they're not being reasonable when at the very same time this bill is before us, folks that want further control are saying it's just a good first step. That's their proof. And while there may be an agreement between the leaders not to go further this year with further gun control efforts, it's my understanding there is no such agreement for next year or the year after or the year after that.

So I will conclude by saying this: You just can't have a heart at all if you don't feel for the families and friends and neighbors of the victims of that Newtown massacre. You don't have to be a mom or a dad to know how diabolically evil it is for someone to go in there and shoot first-graders. Everyone understands that we need to do something to address that. Mental health issues, school safety

enhancements, but when it comes to further regulations on guns and ammunition, in one of the states that is touted as having right now some of the most tough gun laws in the United States of America, I think goes one step too far.

And for that reason, Madam President, with the utmost respect to the proponents of legislation, and with the utmost respect to the moms and the dads and the husbands and the wives and the brothers and the sisters and all of the God-fearing, law-abiding citizens in the State of Connecticut, I will have to vote no this afternoon.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Thank you, Madam President.

What a journey it's been for us, these last several months, for each one of us. I'm 77 years of age, and yet I have learned so much in the last two-and-a-half months about Connecticut, about our residents, about their feelings.

I heard, first and foremost, fear because of Newtown. And fear came from two sources -- and you, you heard it too, I'm sure -- the fear of -- of homeowners that if they didn't have guns with multiple rounds, they would never be able to protect themselves. One -- one constituent of mine, in Guilford, said to me, I need more than ten rounds in my gun magazine because I'm lousy shot. When they come in my home, I'll -- I'll miss the first ten rounds.

And -- and I also heard fear, as you've heard fear, from so many people who have families and are concerned about what's going to happen as long as we have this obsession with guns. And I -- I felt and I've -- I'm sure many of you feel that there is too

great, in Connecticut and in the country, an obsession with assault guns and with the large-capacity gun magazines.

I also heard -- we heard a bit from Senator Kissel on this -- about great objection to government interference. I went into a gun shop yesterday. There was a huge poster, as you walk in the gun shop. It said, Background checks start with the President; okay? Government interference is another thing that I heard more loudly than I've ever heard before, in my eight years in the State Senate.

So what do we have before us today? Clearly we have the most comprehensive gun violence legislation in America. It deals with so many facets and in such a comprehensive way; reasonable gun restriction; mental health; school security, as our colleagues have well articulated this morning and this afternoon.

But I must say to you, too, that this bill has a significant and alarming omission that we must in the future address, and that omission is that it allows gun owners today who have the large-capacity magazines of more than ten rounds, it allows them to keep them for the rest of their lives.

Adam Lanza killed those kids and adults because he had a 30-round -- he had 10, actually -- 30-round magazines that he brought to that elementary school that morning. And we learned that because of these gun magazines, he was able to fire what looks like 154 bullets, 154 rounds in about 4 minutes.

The Newtown parents, we all got a letter from them on Monday of this week. They reminded us of the key issue here. The letter says that our proposal grandfathers existing, large-capacity magazines, leaving a gaping hole on what we believe is the most dangerous feature of an assault weapon. And it goes on and says how can we not remove large-capacity magazine from Connecticut if we know that it might save even one more child, teacher or parent? That addresses a problem that we in the future must undertake.

Yesterday, I stood in line, for a long time, at a gun shop and -- and purchased a couple of gun magazines that I want to share with you. This -- this one here is -- is the kind that the -- the Newtown killer used. It's a 30; it contains 30 bullets, 30 rounds in it. And, unfortunately, those of -- those people who have this magazine will be able to keep it under the current legislation. This one actually contains 60 rounds. The salesman in the gun shop said, you better grab it quick; it's the last one. We won't get any more in until Friday, he said. Okay? That's the climate. That's the environment that we're facing today.

I did prepare, I did prepare an amendment that I'm not going to call. I prepared an amendment, which actually is LCO 5453, to deal with this omission, what I believe is an omission. We will look at that some other day, maybe in some other year. But we made a step today, but I want to just remind you from the vantage point of many of us and many of our constituents, what we're doing today is a work in progress.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Guglielmo.

SENATOR GUGLIELMO:

Thank you, Madam President.

You know, I have -- I'm the Ranking Member on Public Safety, so I sat through the two, 18-hour-or-so public hearings, and I heard from a lot of people. And like Senator Meyer, I learned a lot, myself. I -- I did know something about firearms from my time in the service and because I'm a member of a local rod and gun club, but rather hardly an expert; but I did learn.

But even before we get into the weeds of this bill, which is -- I don't know, Scott has it here -- 140

pages or so, I -- I knew I was going to vote no because I didn't need to get into the weeds of the legislation; I can't get by the premise.

See, the premise set, that boggles my mind and boggled the minds of so many of the people who testified in front of our committee, is you have two columns, you know. And one column you have a deranged young man, a mass murderer. I wouldn't even call him a "shooter" -- that kinds of glorifies him -- he's a mass murderer. A sick individual hero-worshipped other mass murders, apparently. We don't know that for a fact, because we don't have the police report; we got drips and drabs, but that's an argument for another day. I mean, should we even be here without a complete police report? I -- I think not, but that's what happened.

So that's the column we have; we have a mass murderer, somebody who's very, very sick. And then in the other column, we have ordinary citizens, clean record, work hard, pay their taxes, many of them Veterans, want to be left alone, never caused a problem in the past, won't today, won't tomorrow. So how does this body connect the dots between the mass murderer and the ordinary citizen? See, that's what I don't get. So getting into the weeds about what we're going to ban from the average citizen, the ordinary guy and gal, I'm not interesting in that. Because anytime you go down that path, I think it's wrong, because you're punishing the wrong teem; it's just simple. The premise is wrong.

And I'm going to wait today to hear if anybody connects those dots for me, how we get Adam Lanza tied up with the guys at the Rockville Fish and Game Club. That's what I want to know. And I have a lot of rod and gun clubs in my district. I'm a member of Rockville Fish and Game. I'm an honorary member of the Fin Fur and Feather, up in Chaplin. I've gone to all the game dinners, wondered what I was eating in the game stew, always a concern of mine but a lot of, lot of others, too, I think. We got Somers sportsmen's club, one in Ashford, one in Pomfret, so I know a lot of these folks over the 21 years that I've served.

I'm a city boy, basically, so this was all an education to me when I moved up here in the 1960s. And so I got to know these people. So what I do know is that they're not a problem; never were, never will be, not now, not ever. But I also know we're doing them great harm psychologically, because they feel hurt that they're being lumped together with somebody who's obviously sick and deranged, and being a straw man, basically, to be knocked down for what happened in Newtown. I don't know if they're more sad than mad, but I've been talking to a lot of them and it's hard to say.

The other component of this, which I'll just touch on, is there is an economic component to this; and they were here a couple of weeks ago, all the guys and gals that work in the industry in Connecticut that produces firearms and ammunition. We're a state that's known for that. We had pride in being -- oh, in fact we designated a park over there, at Colt. It was state money, as I recall, because we were proud of our history of firearms, but now I don't know as -- I guess we're not.

But the point I'm having to make or want to make is there's 5000 jobs connected indirectly or directly with the firearms' industry is Connecticut. Hartford Courant today, if you haven't read it, there's a column in the business page and Dan Haar makes that point, made it -- has had several good columns on the economic impact.

But one point I hadn't thought about until today, when he raised that in his column, I thought that, well, this will be bad for these manufacturers because they'll lose the Connecticut market. But see, there's a component that I wasn't aware of that he brought up in the article, that people who buy firearms in other states, the other 49, boycott guns that are made in states that have a bad repetition, who stick a sharp stick in the eye of gun owners. So you can buy that AR-15, because there's no patent, in several states by several manufacturers; don't have to buy the Connecticut AR-15, and they won't. And that's what happens in other states, have done this.

And I believe it was the Vice President of Mossberg who said, he called it "brand damage." We're going to have damage to the brand. He is getting offers every day, from all over this country, from other states, to relocate. And we all know here that this is not exactly the home of business friendly. We tax people too much. We regulate them too much. I ran a small business most of my life, my daughter runs it now; it is hard. It's hard everywhere, but it -- we make it really hard in Connecticut, almost adversarial in Connecticut. So now he's getting all these offers from other states, and his quote was something to the effect, if I stay here I might be out of business in three years because of this brand damage. What choice do I have? So that's the economic component.

You never want to trade, you know, guns for blood -- I mean money for blood, but there is an economic component, and I think if you don't mention it, you're make -- it's avoiding part of the equation.

Then, you know, the interesting thing that I thought about, you -- you know, most of the, most of you who know me know I don't care for corporate welfare. I don't like giving money to big companies, but we do it. We did it under Republican Governors, too, so I'm not blaming Governor Malloy. I think it takes -- is a bad precedent for Governor -- government to pick winners and losers; never made any sense to me. I was a small-business guy. I never understood why government was in that business of picking winners and losers, but we do it.

So here we are willing to throw out, potentially, 5000 jobs, and we gave $291 million to Jackson Laboratories for 300 jobs; I didn't vote for that. That didn't make any sense. Ninety-one million to Starwood Corporation for 800 jobs. We have ESPN, CIGNA, and its goes on and on. So what are we going to -- you know, it just doesn't make any sense to me.

On the one hand -- in fact, when Cabelas came in, we -- we -- they got state aid. Any you, any of you've gone to Cabelas, you see where that road leads. You get off 84; you drive into their parking lot. You go there before you go to Rentschler Field; it's easier to get in there. And we designed that for them

because we wanted them here. Now we're saying, apparently, we don't want them here.

And, finally, like Senator Kissel said, you know, just because I'm on this side of the issue does not mean I don't respect the others; I do. And just because I'm on this side of the issue doesn't mean that I'm not appalled by what happened in Newtown. I'm a grandfather of eight. I've got three in elementary school, and if you think that I thought that anything in this bill would help make them safer, that I wouldn't vote for it, you're mistaken.

The morning that this happened, I was in my youngest grandson's preschool class. Preschool and kindergarten, December 14th, 9:30, had their Christmas pageant. My little guy has got red, curly hair and blue eyes. I don't know where that came from but I don't ask. But he's a red, curly headed guy, blue eyes, and if I may say so, really cute as a button. They're all in there and they've got their little hats, their elf hats, taped to their head that they made in art class. And they're singing Christmas songs and Kwanzaa and -- and all the different songs of the season. And they're so earnest and they're trying so hard. You know, you can't walk -- everybody walked out with a smile. My -- my mother was there; she's 96. Even my oldest grandson, who's 20, he came. Obviously my daughter and son-in-law and my wife and I, along with a packed room full of people, grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, everybody is smiling.

And then you get into your car. You turn on the radio and you say, wow, how can this happen? How can somebody be so sick as to kill 20 babies, like my little guy, like John's little guys? So I understand that we have to do something.

People say you have to do something, but we could do a lot of things, and some of them are in this bill. We could reinstate the gun trafficking task force, for a million bucks; it's in this bill. That's a good thing, like John said, you know, Senator Kissel said, there are good things in this bill. That's a good thing. It worked.

We can make a minimum mandatory sentence for straw buyers. You buy a, you buy a weapon for somebody who is illegal and you know what? That judge has got no discretion. You're going to jail for two or three years, whatever we say. And if you think that wouldn't be a deterrent, I think you're mistaken. Because to be a straw buyer, you got to have a clean record. To have a clean record, you can't be familiar with our corrections' system. And the last thing most people with clean records want to do is go into our correction system. That would be a real deterrent. That would be doing something.

You could put more money into Senator Williams' hand for school security, which we did do in this bill, $15 million.

You could totally eliminate the early release program, which I'm not sure whether this does it or not. There's -- we've only had the bill for a little bit, so I'm not sure. It says it does it but I'd like to read the details.

So basically, I guess, the problem is I can't connect the dots between Adam Lanza and the -- and the good guys. So I think we need to do something, but I guess we should be doing something that does good, not something that just feels good.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Coleman.

SENATOR COLEMAN:

Thank you, very much, Madam President.

I rise in proud support of this bill before us, and the first thing that I want to do is to commend all of the members who served on the Bipartisan Task Force, but, in particular, Senator Williams and Senator McKinney for, I think, the phenomenal leadership that

they exhibited in the work that they did in connection with the task force.

I'm very pleased that the task force efforts were characterized by bipartisanship and that the approach, as well as the product that was yielded, was comprehensive in nature. And I had the honor of serving on the Gun Violence Prevention Work Group that was chaired or Co-chaired by Senator Looney, who did his usual, very capable and thoughtful job in leading the work of that work group.

I'll be very brief. I certainly just wanted to make two comments, and the first was that I do believe that what we do today will make it less likely that an incident like the incident that occurred in Newtown will occur again. Will it guarantee that such an incident will not occur? I don't believe so. But, frankly, I have a difficult time in understanding those who argue that because we can't guarantee that regulation of firearms will prevent such an incident from occurring in the future, that we should do -- do nothing.

Doing nothing, it seems to me, would tend to make it likely that such an incident will reoccur, and that is not sensible to me. I think the young lives that were taken in Newtown demand some type of action on our part and including some type of action that will involve regulation of firearms.

The second point that I wanted to make very briefly is that I find it to be tragic and unfortunate that it took an incident like the one in Newtown to focus our concern and our attention on gun violence. And I say it because gun incidents and killings occur on too frequent and regular basis in some of the urban centers in our state; but having said that, I'm very gratified that there was an effort, considerable effort that was made in the provision that's in -- of this bill that will have the effect of addressing some of the violence, that occurs in districts like mine and in some of the urban centers throughout our state.

There was reference made to the Heller Decision. And the thing that struck me about the Heller Decision is paraphrasing. I believe it was Justice Scalia who

said that no person has the right to own any kind of weapon for any purpose whatsoever. And I find that language in that U.S. Supreme Court decision to be very consistent with what we're doing in this bill, and particularly as regards the expansion of our assault weapons ban.

And our own State Supreme Court, in Benjamin v. Bailey, upheld our assault weapons ban, which, again, is consistent, I think, with our effort here today. And so, Madam President, again, I commend the members of the task force and particularly the leaders of that group, and I intend to be a proud supporter of this bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to make one, very short comment about the bill in the backdrop of what every single person in this Circle would agree to be a completely unacceptable massacre that occurred on December 14th in Sandy Hook. And my short comment, before I introduce a couple of amendments, three amendments, through you, Madam President, is that way too much of this bill is, it emphasizes gun-related regulations and rules and conditions.

If you look at the 139 pages of this bill, two-thirds of it is devoted to guns, and it happens to be in the first section of the bill, as opposed to the second or third section of the bill, which cover mental health and school security. It's a big bill and, as usual, we got it very shortly before we came onto the floors here, so we haven't had a chance to completely review everything, but we got the gist of it, thanks to the people at OLR who was -- who were able to summarize it.

So, despite the fact that I believe, in my judgment, there is too much emphasis on gun regulations and new ones, it does have and make provisions for mental health improvements and school security improvements, and the money is there. And so there are some good parts to this bill.

And so through you, Madam President, the Clerk has an amendment, LCO Number 5458. Will the Clerk please call that amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

Senator, do you want to summarize?

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Yes. I move adoption of the amendment, waive the reading, and seek to summarize, if okay --

THE CHAIR:

Please --

SENATOR FRANTZ:

-- with you.

THE CHAIR:

-- Senator -- Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5458, Senate Amendment Schedule "A," offered by Senator Frantz.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Frantz, now you make your motion, please.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President.

I do move -- I move adoption of the amendment, waive the reading, and seek to summarize. And --

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on adopting and summarize. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President.

What this amendment does, 5458, is it simply carves out shotguns from all of the new regulations that are suggested in the bill before you today. And additionally what it does is it carves out shotgun shell purchases from all the regulations that are suggested in today's bill before us.

Everybody who has read the bill knows that if you are going to -- if this bill is signed into law -- in the future go out and buy a couple of boxes of shotgun shells, you will have to show some form of credential, whether it's an ammunition certificate, an eligibility certificate, a carry permit or the like.

This -- this covers shotguns, which as most of us know who are involved with the sport of shooting, shotguns are primarily used for recreational purposes. They're used to train younger people how to shoot a -- a longer gun responsibly, used for sporting clay purposes and for bird hunting, and that about it. And there aren't very many of those types of firearms that are used in criminal activities, and therefore I think it's a reasonable request to -- to carve them out.

Additionally, gun clubs -- there are many, many of them throughout the entire State of Connecticut -- and it's going to be a nightmare to try to figure out how to get rounds of -- of shotgun shells to club members as well as to guests. Are they purchasing this ammunition? Are they not purchasing it? Is it part of the, you know, guest fees that they pay? Is part of the -- membership fee? We don't know. It's a can of worms. How are we going to enforce something like that?

So, Madam President, I would ask for a roll call vote on this particular amendment, whenever you're ready.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call will be had, sir.

Senate -- Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to oppose the amendment. What we're striving for in this bill is consistency as to ammunition and to firearms, for that matter, in terms of the permitting process and the certificates that are required.

I certainly agree with Senator Frantz that shotguns, when properly used, are absolutely legitimate sporting rifles and they have been for many, many years. However, shotguns, unfortunately, are not immune from being used by criminals for illegal purpose. As a matter of fact, there are some shotguns that have nicknames such as "street sweeper." For that reason, Madam President, I oppose the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote on Senate "A," and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.
Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? If all members have voted, the machine will be closed. And Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally, please.

THE CLERK:

Senate Amendment Schedule "A," for Emergency Certified Bill Number 1160.

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary -- those voting Yea	11
Those voting Nay	25

THE CHAIR:

The amendment fails.

Will you remark?

Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President.

Second amendment of the three that I'd like to introduce to you, the Clerk has that amendment. It's LCO Number 5459. Will the Clerk please call that amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5459, Senator Amendment Schedule "B," offered by Senator Frantz.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President. I move adoption and seek to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

The question is on adoption. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President.

What 5459 does is it distinguishes handguns and pistols from long guns, in terms of their maximum magazine capacity. In this bill, we're looking at a maximum capacity of 10 for the long rifles and 10 for pistols and handguns. What the amendment calls for is there to be a carve-out of handguns and pistols and allow that maximum capacity to be 17 as opposed to 10. The simple reason for that is that you have a much shorter gun, which is much more inaccurate because of its shorter barrel length, typically about three-to-five inches -- some are longer, but three-to-five inches is a normal pistol barrel length -- and the fact that it's very hard to steady, unlike a rifle which you can use your shoulder to steady and draw a bead on whatever the target is.

If, in fact, the Constitution, both the State Constitution and the U.S. Constitution guarantees our right to defend ourselves with firearms, I believe that it's a fair concession to make because they're more inaccurate. It's probably about the equivalent of 10 in a longer gun in terms of accuracy. But when you're trying to defend yourself, it's very difficult to hit your target. We know for a fact that police departments average about 16 percent when they're going after a perpetrator. It takes a lot of rounds to stop that perpetrator in his or her tracks.

So with that, Madam President, unless there are any questions, I would ask for a roll vote as well.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call vote will be taken --

SENATOR FRANTZ:

A roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

-- at the time.

Will you remark?

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to oppose the amendment. Again, we want to be consistent. We want to have our ten-round limitation for magazines to be consistent throughout, whether it's long guns or pistols.

I would also point out the worst mass shooting in American history, at Virginia Tech University, was conducted with pistols, more than 50 people shot, more than 30 people killed.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote, and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators please report to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, if all members have voted, the machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you please call a tally.

THE CLERK:

Senator Amendment Schedule "B," for Emergency Certified Bill Number 1160.

Those voting Yea	10
Those voting Nay	26
Absent, not voting	0
Total Voting Number is	36

THE CHAIR:

Senate Bill -- Senate Amendment "B" has failed.

Senator -- Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President.

The last amendment is LCO 5461. The Clerk, I believe, has that amendment. And will the Clerk please call that amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the amendment.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5461, Senate Amendment Schedule "B," [sic] offered by Senator Frantz. Senate Amend. C

THE CHAIR:

Senator Frantz.

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you, Madam President.

I move adoption and seek to summarize (inaudible) --

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on adoption. Will you proceed, sir?

SENATOR FRANTZ:

Thank you.

Madam President and colleagues around the Circle, 5461 very simply exempts from the regulations called for in today's bill the scrutiny and the required credentials to purchase .22 caliber ammunition. Most of you know what it is. It's very small. It's about an inch long or so, something like that. And, you know, 20 -- it's quarter-of-an-inch in diameter, as far as the projectile, the actual bullet part of the, of the round is concerned. It's not very powerful. It's used primarily for plinking and for target shooting. It's used by young, youngsters, you know, as young as 8 and 10 years old, when they're first learning how to use a firearm for target practice.

It's -- I think the law just goes far too -- it just goes too far when it comes to regulating essentially a very, very tiny round of ammunition that is enjoyed by older folks, younger folks, and people of all ages, for that matter.

And, with that, Madam President, I would also ask for a roll call vote.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call vote will be had.

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President

I rise to oppose the amendment; .22 caliber can certainly be fatal. And, again, what we want is consistency in how we treat the purchase of ammunition and the credentialing and the background checks that are required.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, please call for the, a roll call vote, and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators please report to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all members voted? If all members voted, the machine will be closed. And, Mr. Clerk, will you please call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Amendment Schedule "B," [sic] for Senate Bill 1160. Senate Amend C

Those voting Yea	10
Those voting Nay	26
Absent, not voting	0
Total Voting Number	36

THE CHAIR:

Senate Amendment "C" fails.

Will you remark?

Senator Duff?

SENATOR DUFF:

Yup. Thank you, Madam President.

You know, we go back to that day, on December 14th, and it started off like any other day. It was a cold, clear day, almost like today is, and we were having meetings. As a matter of fact, Senator Boucher and I were sitting next to each other at the Norwalk Senior Center when we received an e-mail about a shooting in Newtown and not quite sure what that meant and what

was really happening, on only to find out later the horror of that day, what really had actually happened.

And I remember thinking that we all wanted to do something. And as elected officials, that's kind of why we're here; we like to fix things. We want to help people and do good. And I remember that a lot of other people felt the same way as well. Everybody wanted to do something, where it was money to Newtown, whether it was -- people were sending Teddy Bears. It almost evoked memories after 9-11.

And today, because of the hard work of so many people, my colleagues who worked on those committees, our Legislative leaders, our Governor, our Lieutenant Governor, we're here today to vote on something that will hopefully prevent future tragedies like the one that we saw in Newtown.

As a citizen of this state and as a State Senator, I'm honored and privileged to vote for this bill today. I'm proud of the fact that it is a bipartisan bill, that Democrats and Republicans have come together to make a law that addresses not only gun violence but also mental health and school security.

I would hope that the residents of the state are proud that we have a strong, comprehensive, and bipartisan bill. Indeed, the eyes of the state and the nation are on us, and I can only hope that other Legislatures around the nation and in Washington will follow our bipartisan lead today.

Some will say that we have gone too fast, but the process that we have has worked. We have taken our time. We are here to pass laws without passion or prejudice, and I would say that if we came in a few days after the Newtown tragedy, a bill that we have might look a lot different than the one we have today.

But we had bipartisan committees to look and investigate and to make recommendations. And I was not on those committees, but whether you were on those committees or not, we've all taken the time and met with our constituents here at the Capitol, in our districts, we've talked on the phone, we have literally returned thousands of e-mails to our

constituents, and we have attended forums. We've had a lengthy and a thoughtful process, whether you agree or disagree with the legislation we have today.

And because of that, while not a unanimous sentiment, I feel confident in how a majority of my constituents feel about this issue today. Therefore, I will be voting yes and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator LeBeau, first.

SENATOR LeBEAU:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise in support of the bill, and I'd like to thank the leadership of this Chamber, particularly Senator Williams and the -- and Senator McKinney for their work, and all of the members of the task force that led us here today.

I did not attend many of those meetings, but I have to tell you I watched some of CPTV that went late into the night. I could not believe the number of people who showed and gave of themselves and their opinions, many of here -- I'm sure are here today, and the -- the patience and the forbearance of the -- the Legislators who were part of that process. I, in some ways, this was our finest hour.

I find the debate and the general debate that we've had over the last three months rather ironic, because it seems that both sides -- and actually Senator Meyer mentioned this earlier -- that both sides are coming from a place of fear. We saw a slaughter in Newtown, and I think that's what we fear. We fear that again. We fear that for our kids. With fear that for our families. And we've, the other side -- and you can tell from their signs and their words -- they fear tyranny, the -- the loss of their rights.

And I'm reminded of a book that I recently read for the second time, the Pulitzer Prize-winning book called, "The Battle Cry of Freedom." It's about the Civil War. And in the preface to the book, the author, McPherson, talks about how both and -- both sides thought they were fighting for freedom, the South for the freedom to have its way of life; the North for the personal freedom for the slaves.

Now, interesting that that is not what the war started off as. The South, because of its fear, because of its fear of its loss of rights, started the war. The North was not there to get rid of slavery; they just didn't want the expansion of slavery. But by 1863, the purpose of the war had changed for -- to have to -- as a declaration for freedom for all.

Today, there's a war, and thank God it's not a war. Thank God that we're not fighting each other. We're disagreeing with each other in a civil way, in a, in a way that our forefathers laid out for us to settle our differences. The hearing process that -- that was an -- an incredible -- as I was referring to earlier -- an incredible hearing process, over 60 hours of hearings and people listening and to each other and trying to reason with each other.

And I believe that what has come out of this is a balanced bill, a bill that contains -- I, you know, I out talking at a -- a meeting the other night in South Windsor -- it's part of my district -- and people, all they could, all they focused on were the gun aspects of the bill. And I said, no, there's -- there's a lot more to this bill. There's a major emphasis on mental health. There's a major emphasis on school safety. And, yes there are restrictions on guns and ammunition.

And so I think -- and I think that part of the bill is balanced. I know some folks in the audience here today, and in the galleries, do not believe so but I do. And it balances the need that we have, our basic needs for public safety versus the need, as -- and said by Senator Kissel -- for -- for self-prosection and the Second Amendment rights.

But let me remind folks that no rights are unabridged. There is no right in the Constitution that is unabridged, whether -- whether it's the right to free speech or the right to gun ownership. There's nobody here asking because want to have RPGs or a tank or a nuclear weapon or grenades. That's an abridgment of the rights, and those have been accepted by the Supreme Court. The question is whether these rights, these abridgments of rights are reasonable. And I believe that are.

And I find it ironic, I -- listening to Senator Kissel, who I have tremendous respect for and is my neighbor, that his -- we come back to fear, the fear of incrementalism, the fear not of what we're voting on today but what we might vote on tomorrow.

I accept what we're voting on today as a good and balanced bill, and I will vote for it for that reason. And I respect the members of this Circle, and I respect the members up in the galleries. And I respect the voters at home, to ensure that as we move forward, we will continue to act in a fair and balanced way.

And to Senator Guglielmo, my other neighbor on the other side, and that we share Ellington, we don't share this view, Senator, because I believe that this bill does good and not just feels good.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Gerratana.

SENATOR GERRATANA:

Madam President, thank you, so much, for the opportunity to speak today in favor of this emergency certified bill. Yes is it emergency certified, but let me tell you, many, many months of work has gone into it.

I want to thank my leadership, Senator Williams, and, of course, Senator Looney for appointing me to the Bipartisan Task Force. My focus and my energy was on

the subcommittee, the Mental Health Subcommittee, and I am proud to say that the work that Senator Harp, under the leadership of Senator Harp and also Representative Woods, we came up with some legislation that goes a long, long way to helping us all deal with the, not just with the tragedy that happened in Newtown but for our state in understanding what the mental health challenges are going to be.

Amongst the provisions are ones that we talked to about with the health care providers in our state and, indeed, beyond our state. And I have to applaud them all. They came to our hearing, our 12-hour hearing on mental health issues; many of them came with such wonderful suggestions. And, also, we got to know so many things about behavioral mental health that we were not totally aware of. Amongst that information was that we have many loops and gaps in our system of delivery, here in the state. So this underlying bill, of course, goes to address that.

I want to thank, in particular, the American Academy of Pediatricians. Our pediatricians in our country have been, indeed, on the front line in bringing forth to us the changes in health care and health care reform. They have developed a concept called the "patient-centered homes." This is where, for pediatricians, it is the child who is at the center, and it is for pediatricians to coordinate all the care for that child.

So I want to applaud them and, in particular, two doctors, two distinguished doctors here in our state. One is Dr. Andrew Lustbader, of Yale University, and the other is Dr. Dan Connor, at UConn Health Center, both researchers in child psychology and actively treating children and also adolescents. I thank them for their work and for bringing to us a plan that will make sure that no child, no child in the State of Connecticut will go without some access to mental health, a system of coordination and care that we are badly in need of. And this came out during the task force, and that is being enacted.

I also want to say that, you know, we all spent a lot of time researching and reading, and in his book, David Hemenway, in "Private Guns and Public Health"

says public health is pro-health; it is not anti-gun. And access to guns is a big part of the public health challenges in our country today. Nine thousand people are killed a day, due to this chronic illness.

So I want to say that the underlying bill also provides for us further work to do. But, Senator LeBeau, I want you to know that we should not live in fear. Connecticut should not live in fear, and Connecticut should know that from this day forward, with passage of this bill, that we will heal.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Bye.

SENATOR BYE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Thanks to members of the Senate for their comments so far.

I want to focus on five ways that this bill and the process to getting here makes Connecticut safer. Number one, this bill requires an ammunition eligibility certificate to purchase ammunition. This could easily be an overlooked part of this bill, but this requirement keeps ammunition out of the hands of illegal gun owners. So I think, you know, Senator Looney has been championing this, and I think he's right. I think this is one of the most important parts of this bill.

The bill, also, number two, establishes a behavioral health task force that will work to create a system of supports for adolescents who have behavioral health challenges. As many of you, I heard from so many people through this process. But one Connecticut tragedy is the supports that are not there for families who are begging for help for their adolescents who need mental health supports. That's a tragedy that's going on now, and this bill has a

process in place to address that Connecticut tragedy. Parents' stories are so difficult to hear, those who are struggling.

Number three, this bill bans high-capacity magazines with over ten rounds. Again, over the fourth -- four months, I've come to understand that this accessory is what enables mass destruction, the number of bullets that can be fired so quickly. And this bill is in reaction to a mass shooting. This is a critical component of this bill that will make Connecticut safer.

The bill also addresses safety in our schools and safety on our college campuses in a smart, systematic way. It will be informed my best practices and by law enforcement professionals in our state.

This bill also will set up a process that -- again, something that could be overlooked -- to develop standards for our public schools. Right now, there are really no standards that superintendents have to say how many social workers do I need; how many guidance counselors; how many school psychologists. And I'm really proud that this was added into the task force, the behavioral health task force. Because, let's face it, schools are focused on education, but that's where the kids are. That's where some of these problems are expressed, and that's a really critical component.

The fifth way that this bill makes Connecticut safer is the model that our leadership presented to us and to our state about how to solve problems with a democratic process. Sandy Hook brought us together as a state. We had a collective grief, a collective love for the families of the victims, and a collective resolve to address all the different facets of this terrible tragedy.

What's making us different is how we're approaching it. We took our time. We listened to both sides. We were bonded by this experience, and we knew that for our state to heal, we needed to model respectful discourse; that's what democracy is. And a fair and balances democracy helps avoid violence; there's a peaceful transfer, a peaceful imposition of laws.

Our grief, our love, and our resolve for change in Connecticut does not know party labors -- party labels. Our legislative leaders decided that we would just proceed in a bipartisan fashion and we would have a conversation as a state. We had many hours of conversations and not just here. Like many of you, I spent hours in hearings.

I also talked for hours with mothers who organized and were horrified by these murders and mobilized to make a difference. I spent an afternoon at a gun club, and I learned a lot that helped me understand about guns. I went to community forums about gun safety. One gun owner spent hours in his living room showing me his equipment, how easily guns are adapted, what a magazine is. He -- he literally wanted me to understand the vocabulary and the way that the guns worked.

And then last Monday I was privileged to join the Episcopal Bishops of Connecticut in the Stations of the Cross in honor of Sandy Hook.

These are the five ways, the process, and the items in that bill that I believe Connecticut will be safer, democracy at work.

There are members of this Senate who are going to vote against this bill, and they've told you their concerns, and -- and others will too. That's part of democracy. But be sure that every member of this Circle cares deeply for the victims and for their families and made contributes to this bill or other policies that help the public be more safe in Connecticut.

Our Senate leaders spent weeks, literally weeks negotiating and talking through proposals in good faith. Thank you for your belief in us and for your determination to get a bill that was collective and that will make a difference for Connecticut.

I'm so proud of our state today, but I wish we weren't here right now doing this emergency certified bill. Like everyone sitting here today, I wish we could turn back the clock and take back those five minutes, about

as long as my remarks; that's how long it took for that mass destruction where over 150 bullets were fired at children and at teachers, and 26 of them were murdered.

Courageous staff put themselves in harm's way; some were killed. Countless others' lives were saved because of the courage of other teachers. That day, every parent and every teacher realized that any teacher would give what Lincoln coined "the last full measure of devotion" for their students to protect them. I wish Connecticut never had to realize that.

Families in Sandy Hook faced terror as they raced to gather their children. Twenty of those families would return with a state trooper and not with their child. No one wishes we could turn back the clock more than those families or the hundreds of others whose children escaped but who face repercussions of this senseless violence.

In his calls for improved gun safety laws, our President keeps referring to all the missed birthdays, the missed graduations and other life events that have been robbed by American -- from American families because of gun violence. In Connecticut, these references hold special meanings for so many of us sitting here today and at home.

Some of us in the Chamber know someone who will miss a life event in the wake of Sandy Hook, like President Obama referred to. For me, it's Ana Grace Marquez-Greene. Ana Grace would have turned seven this week. Anyone who's seen her pictures or heard her sing knows that our whole world lost a Connecticut treasure on that day. Her brother and parents will never have that amazing little girl in their lives again. We all wish she was having an uneventful seventh birthday this week and that she would be showered with the love and caring that her family showered on her each day; if only. But we can't turn back the clock; we can only go forward.

And we've gone forward with collaborative, innovative, ground-breaking legislation, and we can look forward with Connecticut and with pride in this democratic process. And in the legacy and in the model policies

that I believe this legislation brings to these United States.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Model Bottolea -- Bartolomeo -- I'm sorry, Dante, again.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

I stand here to thank our leadership, the Republican leadership and every single one of --

THE CHAIR:

Senator, the microphone is not on.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Hello?

A VOICE:

(Inaudible.)

THE CHAIR:

Senator, would you use -- oh, there you go.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

I think --

THE CHAIR:

Try it.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

-- we're on. Are we --

THE CHAIR:

No.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

-- live?

THE CHAIR:

Why don't you try Senator Meyer's microphone.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

SENATOR BARTOLOMEO:

I would like to thank not only our leadership on the Democratic's Caucus but also the leadership of the Republican Caucus and every Senator and Representative who serves in this building and serves their community, because each and every one of us, regardless of how we choose to vote on this bill, has spent countless hours of research or reflection to do what's right for them and to make this decision, and no one has taken this lightly.

I do support this bill and I'd like to mention a few of the things that I appreciate most, that are within this bill. This bill works to strengthen laws that we already have on the books. We look to straw purchases, which was previously a class B misdemeanor. And the penalty at that point was a slap on the wrist. And now we are increasing this penalty to a two-year, mandatory minimum, with prison sentence, and we do that for at least ten other felonies.

It also closes at least one of the loopholes in the earned risk reduction credit program, and these are both issues that I have fought for since I began here, recently.

It also -- I served on the School Safety and Security Working Group, and this bill helps our districts who are looking for guidance with the existing and future school construction so that we can harden our buildings but not our learning environment. And, for me, that's very important, and for educators and for children. We need our schools to remain a place where our students and our teachers feel comfortable and enthusiastic about learning. So this bill will help us to recognize that school districts are already struggling for funding for educational purposes and for their, for their educational programs. And it will make available grant funding to increase the security measures to harden their exteriors and not their interiors.

This bill also has the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services working in collaboration with the State Department of Education to administer training of an international, already established program called the "mental health first aid program." It teaches educators and staff to recognize this, the signs of mental health issues and concerns, and it connects them to those mental health services.

Certainly there's aspects of this bill that may be difficult for some of us to swallow. But, actually, as my grandmother always said, when you're faced with a very difficult decision, you have to weigh your pluses and minuses. The fact that we've compromised and worked in a bipartisan way to put together a bill that I believe will lead the nation in very important and much-needed reform absolutely is -- is a positive. And I am proud and pleased to be able to support this bill.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Markley.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

I want to say that it's a difficult thing to speak about anything in reference to this tragedy. I think that our language is inadequate to the pain that we know was suffered, especially by the parents involved, by the relatives of the children and the teachers who were involved and by the responders, by the people who -- who felt the pain, you -- you, yourself, Madam President, and the Governor who were very much on the scene throughout it.

We only have the language that we have, ourselves, to speak with, and that's the best we can do. I think that it's a tragedy that made me think back to other experiences I've had in my life that I think we all shared. I'd go back so far, beyond most of you here in this Circle or most of you in this room, back to the moment I remember in second grade when I heard that President Kennedy had been shot, something that I'll never forget, one of those experiences where I can see where I was sitting and who was standing where and how we were told about it and over the years, other such events, that sometimes I think are what makes old men and women of us, the emotion that we go through and what it takes out of us; so my apologies for not having words commensurate to address such a situation.

I'm also going to -- in the course of what I have to say -- use a few analogies, and I feel like analogies are always dangerous things, because they're inherently imperfect, illuminating, as far as it goes, but I think they can tend to be reductive of -- of the situation, and I -- I certainly don't mean to do that.

But I want to express myself as clearly as I can and speak my mind on this, and not at great length. I've kind of taken an oath to myself not to impede unnecessarily the business of this Chamber. I'd like to use my words as much as possible to illuminate, if nothing else, my own perspective but not to be a barrier to finishing the work that needs to be done here.

Let me say it's a strange thing in my own mind that I've become so involved and so committed on this issue. I'm not a gun owner. I was not raised in

that, in that culture. I think I probably, as a young person, shared some of doubts about the reasons that somebody would be interested in those activities, and hunting, so forth.

I had a period of my life when I had the experience of living with a number of young men for, well, from out West, who came from a very different part of the world and had a very different background and who became very good friends of mine, who I've had affection and respect for. And it was at that time that I realized that my own perspective on these things was -- was not the only perspective that existed but that one is accustomed to what you grow up with that seems right, and it seems natural. And it made me, let's say, neutral on the subject in a certain way, neither drawn to or interested, particularly, in guns but appreciating the fact that others were drawn to them and as, perhaps, was an important lesson for me to learn at that point in my life, because I've seen that in many other ways in many other things since then.

I guess the question when you look at a gun is to some extent what do you see. Do you see something which is a -- a tool, a mechanical object designed, whether it's for shooting a target, shooting an animal, for self-defense, whatever it is, but a neutral object in the way that most mechanical objects we deal with in this world are? Or do we see something which is essentially, inherently a bad thing, an evil? And I would say if it is, if a gun is a tool like other guns, if it's some -- like other things -- like other mechanical objects, it's reasonable to expect restrictions on its safety, like we would with anything else, like we do with cars, for instance, to say they have to be operated safely, there has to be a reasonable amount of regulation and so forth. And if there are problems with them that can be addressed by putting restrictions on them, we might consider those restrictions, leaving aside the question of whether guns for other reasons have -- are -- are privileged.

If you see a gun inherently as an evil thing, then I think it's a natural thing to want to restrict it to the point of extinction. And I think that's the basic division in this Chamber. And, again, I don't say this to put words in anyone's mouth -- and forgive me

if I do that -- but I think that there's an outlook toward guns, which naturally lends one to want to restrict it as much as possible.

I used the analogy in discussing this, a few months ago, to alcohol. I think that alcohol is, perhaps, as much an evil, in a way, as anything that we have in common circulation; I say that as one who has tasted and enjoyed that evil myself. But it is, what I can tell my young nephews, it's a vice, and a vice to my mind is something that you always want to be trying to do less of and not more of, that you want to be consciously aware of. But I think alcohol has done -- and I've seen in my own life -- more damage that maybe anything else that I've seen and I think something that kills more people a year than almost anything else.

It was recognized; a movement emerged in this country a-hundred-and-fifty years ago, a-hundred-and-forty years ago to get alcohol out of our society, I think a reasonable position, in many ways. And by political process and political pressure, it triumphed finally, and the decision was made to eliminate it entirely. That, to my mind, is a reasonable position if you see something as an inherent evil, which is to get rid of it, to say no more of it. The trouble in that case was it couldn't be done.

And I would say the trouble with, in this case, is it can't be done either, whatever you might think of the wisdom of it. What I think we have with guns is an attempt to identify some of them as particularly bad as opposed to others, as if we were to say we have an alcohol problem, we have a drinking problem, so we're going to ban not even hard liquor, let's say, but -- but mixed drinks that are served in cocktail glasses. We'll ban Manhattans; we'll ban martinis. Well, if you think there's a drinking problem, that might have some very small effect, but it doesn't get at it, because essentially the danger is still there.

I feel that we're doing a very similar thing, when we talk about what we call "assault weapons." Every gun is an assault weapon if it is used with the intent to commit an assault. And to try to pick out certain guns and say this is the problem, I think is

intellectually dishonest in the sense that we're not really addressing what the problem is nor are we really being honest about what we're trying to accomplish.

I think that the characteristics by which we define an assault weapon are, in fact, largely cosmetic. We were sitting in the caucus on Monday, looking at pictures of different guns which would or would not be prohibited. If we wanted to talk about what makes the guns dangerous, I think we'd talk about what's brought to my attention many times by people who are in favor of gun control, which is the rate of fire of the guns. But the fact is all these guns fire fast.

The -- with a semi-automatic gun -- and almost the guns that we -- are manufactured and bought now in our society are semi-automatic -- the limiting factor on the rate of fire is not the gun, it's -- it's the finger on the trigger. And the bullet, one bullet is going to come out every time that trigger is squeezed. And, really, the only thing to control that finger is the mind of the person that's holding the weapon or the potential weapon and the soul of the person that holds that weapon.

There's something wrong in our society that events take place like what happened in Newtown, that can't be, can't be credited to any inanimate object. They are the result of a kind of a derangement that I think is beyond our understanding. The idea that a young man could -- whatever he might have fantasized about or imagined -- that he could actually walk into a classroom and look at those young children and do what we did is -- is something that, to my mind, is closer to a kind of a possession. And I don't believe that as Legislators, we can do very much to address that.

I think that it behooves us to look about it, to look at it in the broadest sense that we possibly can and not in the narrowest sense. And I think the broadest sense is a lack of humanity that has occurred between people, in part because of the way that we relate to each other and that we communicate with each other. I feel like there's -- there's a dissociation that I've -- I've witnessed increase in my own lifetime.

We might say, what is the harm of attempting to limit the kind of guns that are available? I'd say that at the point that we recognize that that is not the solution to the problem and that the discrimination between guns is not going to make this world a safer place, I think then we face the problem that we have people who have a deep interest in this, just as they, as they might have an interest in anything else. And that's something you can only understand by knowing the people involved, law-abiding, and in many ways could not be more law abiding, the pillars of the society, frequently Veterans, frequently law enforcement officers who have not done anything to -- to threaten or to destroy life in this society, who find that their -- their past time, their interest is going to be demonized and they, themselves, brought under suspicion and made to be in a criminal position to suit what I would only say is an obscure agenda. And if they feel that what is going on moves in the direction of confiscation, I think they are entitled, and I think they're right to feel that way, because I see no sense that there is an end to what those who are suspicious of guns would ask for to try to make the society safer.

We've heard today, and I don't -- I -- I think it's an honest response -- I don't -- I don't mean to criticize the statement, that this is -- from some advocates of this legislation -- that this is a step in the right direction. I've not heard anyone who advocates it say this is the end of what needs to be done. If it were, we might at least have something to talk about, but I feel that if the point of this is to, is to take at any given moment what can be taken, then to come back for what remains at another moment, then those who are being affected by it are bound to feel that way.

I'd say that there's two other issues, I think, in America, one in history and one current, that are very similar that way. One was abolition, where the South was very defensive, not necessarily because of what they were defending as far as the rights to open the territories up to slavery and so forth, but the sense that any constriction of those rights put them on the, on the way to the elimination of slavery.

I think the same situation exists today with abortion. Those who defend abortion are very jealous of every kind of abortion, every situation, every restriction on abortion, because they know that once the, once the -- the ban starts to tighten around it, that the practice or the legality of the practice moves in the direction of extinction, the same as the case with gun -- with guns. And I think that -- that their, that those who are concerned are right to be concerned.

In response to this situation and in response to the fact that I think that the bill before us contains many things which are helpful -- I don't think anything which is decisively helpful -- you know, I think the task forces did the best job they could in the time they had available to them. I was on the Mental Health Task Force. Senator Harp, my respect for Senator Harp over the years, working with her on Appropriations has risen week by week, and I thought she did an excellent job, and Terrie Wood, my Co-Ranking Member on Human Services, likewise, yet all we really could do was to identify a few things that we thought were working and put more weight behind them and identify a few things that we thought needed to be looked at and ask that they be looked at, nonetheless, I think a step in the right direction, the same with the school security section.

And the gun safety section, I think, also has elements in it that we all agreed upon, what elements of what started out to be, to my mind, a genuinely bipartisan bill, a genuinely consensus bill that could attract the votes of everyone in this Chamber.

In the interest of promoting that approach, I would ask that the Clerk call an amendment, LCO Number 5460.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the amendment.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5460, Senate Amendment Schedule "D," offered by Senator Markley, and Representative Sampson.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Markley.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

I would move adoption of the amendment and beg your leave to summarize without reading.

THE CHAIR:

The motion is on -- on adoption. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR MARKLEY:

Thank you, very much, Madam President.

As I said, this preserves the recommendations of the -- the Mental Health and the School Safety Task Force. It also, it also preserves those aspects of the Gun Safety Task Force that I think are, in fact, the most likely to deal with the kinds of problems which led to the tragedy in December; that is, it includes the mental health look-back periods. It includes the increased penalty for crimes, either committed with a gun or involving the possession of a gun illegally. It includes the safe-storage provisions and, in fact, also offers a tax credit to encourage the purchase of safes, which would enable safe storage. And it also provides an opportunity for schools to incorporate into the grants, which we've made available to them for school security, the opportunity to apply for funds to be used for school security officers, as well as for the hardening of the, of the building, itself.

I think it is, I think it's a good bill, which I do not believe infringes on the rights of law-abiding gun owners, who I do not believe are the people who deserve to be -- who -- who deserve what the, what the bill before us would do. And I urge adoption of the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I would ask that then the vote is taken, it be taken by roll.

And I rise to oppose the amendment. In my review of this, it appears that it strikes out more or less the essence of the gun violence preservation or protection and prevention measures. You know, I -- I appreciate Senator Markley's point of view, but I believe I don't see anything in here in term of the background checks. Am I wrong about that? I -- I mean, I don't, I don't mean to ask that as a, as a question, but I -- I -- and, of course, the dangerous offender registry is very important.

But, Madam President, really, the heart of our response in terms of gun violence prevention when it cams to the Newtown tragedy and all of the other mass shootings that I enumerated at the outset, come down to a stronger restriction on the assault weapons that have been used in these mass shootings and a limitation on the large-capacity magazines. So for those reasons, Madam President, I oppose the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Welch.

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

I -- I rise in support of this amendment, and my purpose for speaking is something that I think Senator Coleman mentioned earlier, and that is that those of us who do not support the underlying bill couldn't fathom that, that doing nothing was an option. And

this is to say that we're not for doing nothing; in fact, we are for doing something. All of us have been moved, have been touched by this horror that happened in Newtown and -- and all that was revealed to us in the days that follow.

An action is appropriation, action with mental health, action with hardening our schools, even action in keeping guns out of the hands of felons, on ending straw purchases, on background checks. We need to do something and this amendment, I think, is an appropriate something.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I have a question, please, through you to the proponent of the amendment, if I could, please.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Markley, prepare yourself.

Please proceed, sir --

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Madam --

THE CHAIR:

-- ma'am.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Madam President, the question has to do with school resource offices and the funding of school resource office, if I could get clarification on that point, through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Markley.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

Senator Boucher, and through you, Madam President, I -- I believe as the, as the bill was put together by myself and Representative Sampson, that the idea is that the money which is available for -- for towns to apply for -- for grants for hardening of the schools would also include in a competitive grant basis the possibility of applying for grants for school security officers as well.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

I appreciate that clarification. The -- the further question, and the last question would be, would that funding continue into the future or is it a one-time, one-year funding; and, does then the school district have to support that additional operating expense going forward? Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Markley.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

I believe that the funding would last as long as the -- and from the state -- as long as the money which is designated for the general program of school hardening was -- was available. If that was no longer there, then it would not go forward unless the state made a decision to fund -- fund it.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President. I'm much appreciative for the answers.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, will you please call for a roll call vote and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered to the Senate. Senators to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, all members have voted, the machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you please call a tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Amendment Schedule "D," for Senate Bill 1160.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	11
Those voting Nay	25
Absent, not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Senate "D" has failed.

Senator Markley.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

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Thank you, Madam President.

If I may continue briefly, one aspect of this amendment that I, in fact, neglected to mention is addressing the section concerning the Risk Reduction Earned Credit Program, the so-called "early release" program. I voted against that when it first showed up as an implement in the implementer bill and have been an opponent of the program ever since. I know it is addressed in the bill which we have before us. I feel that what has been done in that bill is inadequate and, again, possibly worse than inadequate in that it -- it would seem to make almost no difference, while giving us the sense that we've addressed something which is a danger.

And if I may say in -- in reference to that, we're told in this bill that violent criminals will be forced to serve at least 85 percent of their original sentence. It's my understanding, from what both the Governor and Mike Lawlor, his advisor on these issues has said, that the violent criminals are already serving 85 percent of their sentences. I think they've been thoroughly clear on that, and I feel like either this program needs to be changed to change clearly or we should get rid of it and start over again.

I'm going to say after we're done on this amendment, I have just a word to say about the process by which we arrived here today, but I think that we are repeating the mistake we made with the early release program when it was initiated. It was initiated without any hearings, as part of an implementer bill, something that was so little understood at the time it was voted on that the -- the fine Democratic State Representative who brought it out had to explain the next day, after the vote had taken place, that he had not been correctly informed as to the terms of the bill. We've lived with it since, and I believe that we have lived with it and we've lived with tragedy as a result of it since.

We have another one before us, again, on very short notice, and one part of the bill that changed between yesterday afternoon and this morning was specifically

the Risk Reduction Program. I think that I have no confidence in the changes that have been made, and I don't have the opportunity between now and the moment that we vote to gain the confidence that I'd need to in these changes.

So I have a second amendment, LCO Number 5462. If I --

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

-- may ask the Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5462, Senate Amendment Schedule "E," offered by Senator Markley.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Markley.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Again, if I -- I would move adoption of the amendment and ask that the reading be waived, so that I may summarize it.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on adoption. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR MARKLEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

This amendment would simply eliminate the Risk Reduction Earned Credit Program. I believe there may be aspects of it which are worthwhile, but I think that, I think fiddling with it in the way that we're doing with the underlying bill is going to give us a

false sense of security. And unless we can take this up, from the ground up and subject it to the regular public hearing process, which it has never been through, and have a full discussion of it, we will not have a piece of legislation we can all have confidence in. So I would urge adoption of this amendment.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to oppose the amendment and also to -- to bring good news to Senator Markley, even though I'm opposing the amendment.

The good news is that the -- the language which affects the risk reduction credit in our bill, which prohibits anyone who's been convicted of a violent crime as defined in the statute from being released prior to serving a minimum of 85 percent of their original sentence, that language is identical to language in Raised Bill 6657 of the current session, sponsored by your colleagues, Senators Kissel and Welch. That bill had a public hearing before the Judiciary Committee on March 22nd.

For those reasons, Madam President, I oppose the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Boucher.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I actually rise to support the amendment. I think our good colleague, Senator Markley, has made excellent points. I think the fact that this particular program, after it was rolled out, clearly was seen to have serious flaws, problems, and actually resulted in some very serious crimes being perpetrated after the fact.

And I think he does bring up a good, a good argument for the support of this particular amendment, although I do appreciate the President of the Senate's description of the fact, in giving us at least some amount of comfort, that possibly this works to mitigate some of the issues. However, I think the idea of eliminating the language and starting fresh and looking at the issue does deserve some credit. For that reason, I am supporting the amendment.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Will you remark?

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Madam President, I must have neglected to ask for a roll call vote. I do that, so at this time.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

A roll call vote will be had.

And will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, will you open the machine -- oh, yeah -- call for a roll call vote, and I will open the machine.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, if all members have voted, the machine will be closed. Mr. Clerk, will you call the tally.

THE CLERK:

Senate Bill -- I'm sorry -- Senate Amendment Schedule "E," for Senate Bill 1160.

Total Number Voting	36
Those voting Yea	14
Those voting Nay	22
Absent, not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The amendment fails.

Will you remark?

Senator Markley.

SENATOR MARKLEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Let me say one thing as I've, as I promised, about the process of this -- which I was referring to the process of the amendment before -- the process of the bill that's before us. I may be the only person that rises to say this, and I say it with all respect for the leadership we have here, which I've -- I deeply respect on both sides -- but I think we made a mistake by trying to move forward with this bill the way we did. I think that we have the experience in this Chamber of moving bills through a regular process, through committees, and subjecting them to normal public hearings. And I think that when we step away from that process, we are on, we are on shifting ground, and we never know how it's going to end up.

In this case, I think it was done, as I think almost everything here is done, with the best intentions. But I feel that the intention may have been, first of all, to bring unanimity, which we will not achieve and maybe could not achieve, and, second, I think to speed the process. I think in the end, it's rather paralyzed our process here.

I think that we've gone through a period of a couple of months when other business has moved forward in a desultory way while the attention of the leadership was focused on reaching an agreement on these issues.

I'd further say, and maybe most pointedly, that although the process lasted a number of months, it still has ended in an unseemly rush, to my mind. A final version of this bill was only in my hands this morning. The bill that we had before us yesterday afternoon was still not the final bill, and it wasn't until Monday that we really knew for sure what the outlines of that final bill were going to be. That's not time enough for us to act properly, and I would -- I'm somewhat at a loss as to why the extra days -- because it would only be a matter of days and not weeks -- were not granted for us to examine this bill.

I'm also at a loss to understand why there was no hearing on the bill in its final form. This has been -- and it's something that I've brought up throughout the process -- I know that it can't be guaranteed by any given party involved in it, but I think it's something that we owe to the people of Connecticut with these bills. The fact that there were hearings on the subject matter, that there were opportunities on different individual bills that were going through the process for people to testify -- well, it may be better than nothing, but to my mind it's not adequate, especially to -- for a bill of the significance of what we're voting on here today.

And, again, when we're talking about something that is only a matter of days or a week, I wouldn't be favoring delaying this process for a matter of months but long enough for the people to weigh in on it. I think we do wrong when we do this, and I've seen it more times than I like since I've been back in this Chamber.

I'll say two final things. One is I've had a very unusual experience in returning here after many years, and I wasn't sure how well I'd handle it. Until recently, I thought I was handling it pretty well, but I have thought to myself what -- what was it that -- that -- what was it that -- why did fate desire that I should be here again at this time. And every now and then I feel like I have a message from the past to deliver. So my message from today, for those who might be weighing in their own minds how to vote on this, I was out of this Chamber for 24 years fully -- I won't say, I won't, I won't round up -- 24 years from the end of my first term to the beginning of my second term.

And I didn't think about my service in this. You know, my name, my name is on that plaque over there, because I happen to be here when we renovated the hall. I used to drive by and think isn't it funny I used to serve there and that my name is there, never thinking that I'd -- I'd join it, I'd -- I'd be reunited with my plaque.

I didn't think obsessively about that term but I thought about it from time to time. And one thing, when I thought about votes that I cast, was I thought I have never regretting doing what I thought was right, looking at it over decades. The only votes I regretted were the votes that I cast for what I thought were political reasons, because I felt pressure of one sort, or another. And take that as the advice of somebody who had a long time to reflect on it.

And the second thing I'd say, as I said before, I don't have a passion for firearms. But for whatever reason, I have a passion far personal liberty, and I am very wary to do anything without extremely strong cause which restricts personal liberty. And I also have a passion and a deep respect that has grown throughout my life perhaps to love, for the Constitution of this country, which is really what makes us a country. We don't come from the same place. We haven't always occupied the same piece of land. We don't even necessarily share the same history, but there is one document that defines what

the country is. And out of respect for that document, among other reasons, I will oppose this bill.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Hartley.

SENATOR HARTLEY:

Thank you, very much, Madam President.

Madam President, it was some weeks ago when we gathered in this Chamber to deal with the first responders on that day, to provide for them a safety net which we never had to previously think about before, never having been faced with this kind of tragedy. And we came together and did that, and there -- there was a collective sigh of relief at -- as we finished that proposal that day.

But it was truncated because we knew that our work had only just begun. We knew that the next iteration was one that was going to be far more difficult of a task. And from that time to this afternoon, and perhaps going into this evening, we have strived to resolve that next and looming part of this situation.

Madam President, in all of my years of service -- and I served with you in the House and now have the pleasure to have you officiate in this Chamber -- I have never seen a more polarized issue than this. And yes it is a tragedy that brought us here. We, I don't believe, would be talking and dealing with the -- the gravity of this situation, that unspeakable day, that horror, the -- the mass, the violent slaughter of the innocents and those who were their appointed caretakers.

But this assembly came together and we came together in a way that we have never come together before. It wasn't partisan and was beyond bipartisanship; it was a way that we've never been together before. We were one body. There were no divides, no D's, no R's, we were talking about policy and the terrible circumstances that brought us here. And we strove to

recognize, to the best of our ability, that it is our job to ensure the welfare and the security of our citizenry, our families, our children, but we also knew, at the very same time, that it was our duty, our charge to protect the rights of the law-abiding citizens of this state, and that weighed upon us equally.

As the Chairman of the Public Safety Committee and as also a member of the Gun Task Force, I would be derelict if I didn't recognize the incredible efforts that went in. And -- and I would also like to say that perhaps maybe some might interpret this as self-congratulations and back-patting; there is none of that here today. It is about a tragedy that brought us here and about our respect for each other; opinions, the same or different; and, how we proceeded in a respectful, dignified manner with a task that we all would choose not to have had before us.

But I -- I do want to recognize the work of the Public Safety Committee and particularly our clerk, all of our members, and -- and probably most of all the hundreds and the thousands of citizens who communicated with us, e-mail, letters, phone calls, and -- and those who then came to all of the hearings, and -- and to the hearing that the Public Safety Committee had, which was some 16 hours in the offing.

And especially to those who came and signed up that day but couldn't stay to testify, because as we went into the wee hours of the morning, one particular individual who was there with their children who could not stay, another individual who had to get home to take care of a family member, know that we read your testimony. We recognized your presence, and it was all very much part of our process.

And for those who actually were in the room and testified and felt outnumbered, felt outnumbered because their position was very different than perhaps the greater number that were in the room, I apologize to you if you felt outnumbered. But you should know that everyone who came before us was on an equal footing and everyone's input counted in the same manner.

And I should hope that as you look at this legislation today, you will see the reflection of your input, of your participation, because it clearly is a result of all of that input. I think what we have here today is very, very different than where we started in this conversation, and that is to your credit and in large measure because you, in a very respectful, democratic way, worked with us and -- and continued to dialogue with us.

Having said that, though, this legislation is not unlike other legislation that we pass, and it is far from perfect. It is very infallible; we recognize that. In fact, there's no legislation that we can pass or even presume to pass that is going to be the legislation, the end-all, the be-all, in terms of the cure. And many have said it before me, and probably far more articulate, that we cannot ensure, as we stand here today, to those families and to this entire state that this will never happen again, but yet we can do our best.

And I recall the affirmism which says that the perfect is the enemy of the good, and we know that we're not perfect. In fact, we know how imperfect we are and we know how imperfect our work is. However, that does not mean that we should ever sit by idly without trying to do better.

I recognize the shortcomings in S.B. 11 -- what is it, 1160? But there are some very important parts to that, the gun felony registry, the universal background checks, the addressing the issue of the private transfers; we recognize the -- the flaws and the holes in those processes, they, the behavioral health portion, which is so important, which so many families who find themselves in these circumstances recognize the need for, whether they have insurance or not. And -- and, of course, the school security piece.

And so, Madam President, for those reasons and recognizing our shortcomings, I would like to point out that this is our humble effort and it will bear a dividend.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Cassano.

SENATOR CASSANO:

Thank you, Madam President.

I, too, rise to support the bill, and I'd like to make a couple comments about the bill, itself, and -- and why we're here, I guess. Obviously Newtown was the trigger.

I grew up in Nantucket. I'll never forget, as a junior in high school, I had to go to a town meeting to -- as part of a political science class or history class and see our town meeting form of government work. The town meeting had a bill before it, $15,000; an allocation of $15,000 would be the local share to pay for an instrument landing system for Nantucket. The federal government would have paid the rest; I think it was 85,000, and the good voters of Nantucket voted it down. It was too much money.

August 15th that year, 1958, about 11 o'clock, I was driving in from the beach. We were fishing and we could hear a plane, but we couldn't see it in Nantucket fog, and it crashed. Twenty-four Nantucket people died that night. And they called for a special meeting, and we appropriated the $15,000, a month later. Tragedy brings about a response.

And the tragedy of Newtown has brought a response, a response that for many of us is very difficult to support because none of us can be happy with every part of the bill. Perhaps the good thing is that it's taken a month for the bill to pass, over a month. Four hearings have taken place. I was not on a committee but I kept going in and out on that hearing that went until 3 a.m. in the morning. I left by ten o'clock. I congratulate those that waited and stayed through it.

The courtesy, the respect of the hundreds who waited all day, came here in the morning and left here at night was incredible to see. Some of the things that we might have included in the bill if we passed it then, antique guns might have had to be registered, retroactive takings, a whole bunch of things that would have made the bill far more draconian are not in this bill, as we tried to balance it.

Mental health issues are now a part of the bill that might not have been at that time. Think about what that might have meant? Columbine happened years ago; maybe the bill should have been written after Columbine or after the movie theater massacre or after one of those other types of events that has happened. But when it happened in our own state, we had to react.

As we see the recent news of both the shooter and his mother, maybe if good mental health was available to either one of those, this might not have happened, but we don't have those protections. This bill provides those protections.

I've heard from people that, you know, the gun, that the gun manufacturers will leave. If I live in Montana and I want a Colt, I'm buying a Colt; it's as simple as that. When you buy a gun, you buy a brand. You buy something that you're comfortable with, Remington if you do or (inaudible), whatever it might be, Winchester, you buy a brand. So I'm not concerned about that.

Schools; I think it's a start. I'm not satisfied with that part of the bill. I don't think it goes far enough. We have a public school in Manchester for children through -- two through four, five; Head Start school, 212 kids. Why aren't they protected or the parochial schools? And maybe some day they will be, as we look at future legislation to deal with those issues. I understand that you have to start somewhere, and what this bill does, it starts.

E-mails; we have literally hundreds of e-mails. I have 192 e-mails in the last 24 hours. I get a kick out of one guy, said I had to e-mail you three times because I get points. I don't know who's giving the

points out, but the e-mails are pretty much split, maybe 55/45, whatever it might be, mostly, many of them, good friends of mine, former police officers. I was a mayor for 14 years; I used to go and qualify every year when they qualified. And friends that I qualified with are saying you can't support this. I think we have to support it because it's a step forward.

And to the crowd that came that night, to the crowd that's here today, I applaud them. I applaud them for either side that they stand on because of the respect that they have offered us through this process today. When I went on Public Safety, three years ago, they said, oh, Public Safety; ha-ha, you got the gun crowd. Well, the gun crowd ought to be pretty proud of themselves, the way they handled themselves in this whole process, because they did try to provide information.

I can't tell you how many times I met with people in my office, in town, and so on, to learn about this gun and that gun and this clip and that clip and this magazine, and so on. And so I look at this, I look at this as a, as a compromise that is important to Connecticut, because I think it will make us a better state.

And I would hope that as we have bills in the future dealing with things such as a billion-dollar deficit and some of the other types of legislation, that we get the same kind of citizen support that this bill has gotten from both sides.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Crisco.

SENATOR CRISCO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I rise in -- in support of the bill. I wish to commend Senator Williams and Senator Looney and Senator McKinney and Senator Fasano and the Chairs of our various subcommittees for their leadership. I was particularly impressed not with the knee-jerk reaction to issues that occur from time to time, but about the, but also about the thoughtful, responsible consideration with the numerous hearings and the hours by various Chairmen, like Senator Hartley, to wee hours of the morning to hear every position possible. And I just want to laud my -- my colleagues for what, for their leadership, what they have done.

Because what we are doing, we're acting responsible. We are not addressing gun control; we're addressing gun sense. And we heard many times that the major issue is mental illnesses. And through the leadership of Senator Harp, we have drafted something like 12 different measures, 12 different measures in regard to mental illness. Granted, maybe some of them should have been addressed before and it took a tragedy like Newtown to refocus us on mental illness.

I have the utmost respect for those people who have their ideology in regards to the Second Amendment, their rights. But what about the rights of Ana, Daniel, and -- and Madeline; they have rights too. As in the Declaration of Independence, they have the right to life. That right was taken away from them, and in their honor, the least we could do is provide legislation that will address the issue, not a hundred percent; that can never happen, but hopefully it could address the issue that might avert another Newtown.

So, you know, the -- we have been criticized for our process, but I believe it's better to have tried than to not have tried at all. And I just take great pride as being a member of this Circle. There are great many profiles in courage by both sides of the issue, and I hope that when we take the final vote, that they'll be all green lights for the children of Newtown and the adults.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

The next speaker will be Senator Welch, followed by Leone, followed by Musto, followed by Ayala -- Ayala.

Senator Welch

SENATOR WELCH:

Thank you, Madam President.

As I said in support of Senator Markley's amendment, there is no doubt that this tragedy has touched every person, every heart in this Circle, in this room, in the stands there, whether as a citizen watching the horror on TV that day, whether as a member of this government or a Legislator on the ground there that day, whether as a part of a task force.

And I do thank Senator Williams, Senator Looney, and Senator McKinney for placing me on the Mental Health Task Force, where you could hear the testimony of the moms and dads, the brothers and sisters, the friends who lost their loved ones that day. No doubt it was moving.

It was moving to me, even the next day, as I dropped my wife off to go into the bakery to pick up some cookies for an event we were going to, to listen to my 5-year-old girl, my 5-year-old daughter say, Daddy, I hope they don't shoot her in that restaurant. It is moving. It motivated me. It motivated me to roll up my sleeves and be a part of a task force to make sure that a madman could never commit a mass murder like this again.

But the bill we have before us falls short of that. If that is our goal, this bill falls short. And it does so at the cost of losing liberty. What this -- this country is all about freedom; it's all about liberty. Whether you believe it was divinely given to us, whether or not it was a natural progression of government over the years, whether or not it was our following a natural law, this country is about freedom. And with great freedom comes great responsibility; I think everybody here acknowledges that, great responsibility. And I will be the first to concede that as -- as citizens, as moms and dads, as neighbors, we have not lived up to that

responsibility. But the irresponsibility of some ought not to mean the loss of liberty for others.

Senator Kissel, I think, rightly noted on the fear of incrementalism, fear shared by some in the Circle, fear shared by people we represent out there. And no sooner did he express that fear that I think it was somewhat confirmed by the comments that Senator Meyer made then; there's more to be done here. And I think Senator Markley rightly noted that if this was the end, if this was all we were talking about, maybe there would be more consensus. But I think there's a general consensus that that is not all we are talking about.

I think Senator Williams appropriately listed the horrible events that have taken place in this country over the years and identified a common theme of weapons, guns used in those horrible events. But -- but I see another common theme, and that is evil. That is evil men and women doing evil things, irrespective of what the modality is. And I don't see this Bill 1160 getting to the heart of evil. I don't see this bill convincing the mass murder of Newtown that there's another way, that he could change. I don't see this bill accomplishing those goals.

What I do see is I see us saying to one generation, it is okay to defend yourself in a certain manner but to the next generation, in a world that continues to grow darker, that continues to become less safe, that continues to become scarier, it's not okay for you to defend yourself in that same manner.

I do applaud those who put the process together, who worked so hard to come up with some really good ideas. And 1160 does contain some really good ideas, things we ought to do, things we ought to execute on. But at the end of the day, weighing what this country is about, I cannot support it.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Leone.

SENATOR LEONE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I wish to rise, just to make some brief comments on the bill before us. And first, I'd like to thank our Senate leadership on both sides of the aisle, as well as our House leadership on both sides of the aisle for all the work that has been done to present what's before us today. And I know it couldn't have been easy; rightly so, it shouldn't be easy. This is a very, as was mentioned, polarizing, personal, emotional issue.

We have a lot of history in our country on the ability to defend ourselves, and we should be able to defend ourselves. I respect the ability for a person to defend their life, their personal property, their family, and I don't see anything in this bill that takes that away. You can still own your weapons. You can still have your ammunition. You can still defend your personal property, your family. You can still go to the gun clubs and the shooting ranges for your sport. You can still do those things. And as I look at the -- the language of the bill, and as I look at the title -- and I think the title says it all in term of what we're trying to do here -- this is AN ACT CONCERNING GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND CHILDREN'S SAFETY. Again, that's gun violence prevention, not gun violence taking-away, gun violence prevention and improving children's safety, all because of what happened that dreadful day, December 14th, in Newtown.

And as I look back at the common thread of all the other areas that had those mass shootings, those mass killings, whether it was the two times in Colorado, Arizona, Virginia, numerous others, the common thread is not the one rifle, the one pistol, the one revolver; it's these assault weapons with high-capacity rounds that can shoot multiple rounds in a minute, weapons that are meant for war to defend our country, not to shoot our neighbors, not to shoot our loved ones, not to shoot someone going to school, not to shoot someone going to the store or to a place or worship. It's for war.

And if anyone has been in the military and has shot those weapons, you would know the destruction that it's capable of. And I suspect that many of these mass murderers never served a day in their life in the military to know what it could do, to see the effects. And I respect all the people that are here today on both sides of the issue. I know they're -- they're real; we can't discount them but we do have to confront them. We do have to debate this issue to find the way to move forward to protect the public welfare, to protect the safety of our constituents.

So December 14th, unfortunately, is going to be forever etched in the minds of every Connecticut citizen, maybe not other states. I suspect so, because it seems that this particular act, that has culminated after so many others, all of which we had hoped something would have done then, but because this was so heinous, so horrendous that it went after our children, five, six, seven years old. And any parent that has children in that age range -- and I'm one of them, as well as many others -- and even for those that have older children, you can still see that face in your children when they were that old or that young, I should say, the kind of impact that it has on any parent, on anybody. I don't think you would have a heart if -- if it didn't.

So today I see as a defining moment for us here in Connecticut. It's a defining moment because we have to act. We can choose not do something here because of the tragedy that happened, and I ask how can we not? We must. Those children, our children are our future. Those deaths in Newtown -- and I don't call Newtown as some other place; it's not my town; those aren't my constituents -- I look at them as they are my constituents. Those are our children. It could have been any of our children. It's the old phrase it happened over there; it's not going to happen here.

Well, in fact, it did happen here, and those deaths in Newtown, they represent the loss, not only the future of those children and those families but all of us. We've all lost a sense of humanity when that happened. And if we choose not to act, to address it in some way -- and it's been mentioned, this may not be perfect.

It doesn't address every need. It may go too far for some, not far enough for others, but the point is we're here to try and prevent it from happening again, to have some measure of prevention, to have some measure of improvement in our children's safety.

So I hope that some day when history looks back and looks back on this Chamber and the House and the State of Connecticut -- and I hope all eyes are watching us in what we're trying to do here -- the message that we're trying to send is not to harm people and to harm their rights but to protect those rights and to protect our children, to protect our people from having this kind of tragedy happen again here in Connecticut, and not just in Connecticut but in other states as well and across the world, I hope.

I just don't want another senseless act to happen and we have not acted. At some point, we have to ask ourselves, when is it enough? When, how terrible does it have to be for us to do something? I believe this legislation will help. I pray and hope that it will, not just in Connecticut but everywhere.

And it's because of that, it's because of the prevention and the improvement in safety for our children and our families and our neighbors that we hope this never happens again. And if there's some other loophole where some madman finds a way to circumvent these, these precautions that we've put into place, we'll have to come back. We'll have to do something. But my hope is well, we don't. My hope is that this sends a clear message, and it's for that, that I support this bill.

And I thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

It'll be Senator Musto, followed by Ayala, Maynard, and Linares.

Senator Musto.

SENATOR MUSTO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I rise in support of this bill. The incident in Newtown may have gotten us here today, but what we are doing is we are setting policy for the whole state, both those people who own guns, the sportsmen, people who enjoy shooting them, people who collect them, and also for people who are victims of gun violence and the rest of us who are neither.

I support both sides of this argument and my concerns with this bill, I share some of them. Senator Markley brought up some; Senator Kissel brought up some. I share some of those concerns, but on balance, I think this bill strikes the right balance for the State of Connecticut and the people here.

We have heard a great deal from people who are opposed to this bill, and one of the reasons I support this bill is because a lot of those concerns are addressed in the bill. We've heard that we should not be confiscating people's magazines, confiscating people's guns. This bill does not do that.

We have heard that we should be focusing on mental health. We should be focusing on school safety. We should be focusing on the things that make people safer outside of the gun arena -- this bill does do that -- and that we should enforce the laws we have on the books and make them stronger for people who are actually criminals, who are using guns in a way that harm other people, not for self-defense, not guns in the hands of our law enforcement and military, but for those criminals who are using them in robberies, in murders, in home invasions, who are trafficking guns to those people who shouldn't have them, who are trafficking ammunition to those people who shouldn't have them. This bill does that as well.

We are talking about school safety here as well and trying to figure out how to make those areas where we leave our children every day safer. Senators Cassano -- Senator Cassano's points on that are well taken as well. There are a lot of good arguments from the people around the Circle on all sides of this bill, and I'm proud to be part of this debate. I'm not

going to talk a lot about those things that have already been spoken of, because there's no need to hear it again.

This bill will not prevent all gun crimes. It will not prevent a lunatic from getting a hold of a firearm and killing a bunch of people, children, adults, teachers, law enforcement, others. But we all hope, even those who are not supporting this bill, I suspect, hope that this bill will at least save some lives, that it will prevent some gun crimes.

And that is why I'm supporting this bill, in the hope that it will prevent future crimes that some people will be saved by it, and that it does not take anything away from the people who currently have guns and it puts the proper focus on criminals and our mental health system and the safety of our society.

So if there is, I know there are some people in this Circle who have, are still thinking about this; I would just ask you to consider the arguments that have been made against the bill or against this process, in general, are addressed in this bill. The good things are addressed in this bill and we do them. The things that we've been warned against, this bill does not do. And for that reason, I support it.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Ayala.

SENATOR AYALA:

Thank you, Madam President.

Today I stand in support of this bill. I want to thank the leadership in this Chamber and the leadership in the Chamber below in spending the countless hours, days, in putting together this bill that we're going to vote for.

We're here today because of that tragic event that happened in Newtown, and many people in this Circle have spoken, probably much more eloquent that I can, in defense of those little ones that their lives were so tragically taken.

But today I stand in support of the people in my community, in my district, in urban centers that have faced this, year in, year out, countless number of youth who have died in the streets of our urban centers. Their stories are not told. They have been forgotten. The mothers, fathers, family members, brothers, and sisters who in their own way have lost a piece of their lives; they didn't have advocacy groups stand up for them. They had no e-mail campaigns done in favor of them.

They have had vigils. They have had church services. They have had moments in places like Bridgeport, New Haven, Hartford, and other urban centers where they reach out to their community leaders. They reach out to their mayors. They reach out to their council members. They reach out to local law enforcement, and they reach out to Legislators.

And in a roundabout way, we've gotten here today, and today I want to present their stories. And I want to support this bill because I do believe that there are portions in this bill that speak directly to the tools, to the resources that our police officers can use to combat gun violence in our urban centers.

I pray that there will never, ever be another Newtown tragedy in the State of Connecticut or in these, in these United States. I don't know if that will happen or not. Unfortunately, what I can predict is that somewhere, sometime before this year is out, the city that I call home, Bridgeport will face gun violence again. New Haven and Hartford, other places that without a doubt, probably they can't predict the day or time, but somewhere throughout, gun violence will erupt.

When I look at this bill, I had the opportunity to speak to our chief of police, Chief Gaudette, in Bridgeport, and one of the items that he asked us to do, one of the points that he thought was important

was having a gun offender registry. This is in this bill. This piece provides another tool, another resource for our chief of police, for local police to go after the bad guys, to go after those people that would terrorize our community.

As I continue to look at this bill and I look at another piece that speaks to becoming another tool or resource for our police department and our legal system is the reclassification of gun trafficking laws, higher fines and higher penalties. That's where the problem is at when we look at places like Bridgeport, the trafficking of guns, people coming into our city, bringing these guns and putting them into the hands of criminals, of people who want to do bad. I have no pity for any one of those if they have to serve more time or if they have to pay more money because they decide that the City of Bridgeport is fair game to bring in their guns.

I don't mind if a person from the City of Bridgeport attains a gun legally through gun permits and does what he or she have to do. That's the law; I respect that. But when I have thugs, and when I have folks coming into my community and they want to put the -- their -- those guns into the hands of little ones, teenagers who may not necessarily have the level of respect for life as a grown folk, there's a problem. Our little ones, unfortunately through all types of different issues, whether it's violent games that they're playing or any other things that they might be seeing on TV, sometime are conditioned to think that life is a game and that you can hit the restart button after you lose a life, that things come back to normal. Well, that's not the reality that we live in, and I hope that after this bill gets passed, it's not the reality that those drug -- those -- excuse me -- those gun traffickers are going to have thinking that Bridgeport is still open for business for them.

The last piece that I'd like to address, I'd like to address the issue of mental health. The mental health issue is a serious component to this bill and one that I think is just as important as the violence, the gun violence prevention.

As a teacher, I've had the opportunity to see many students, students that for whatever reason may have been socially awkward, introverts, students that may have had a tough time in socializing with other students. And there's a tremendous responsibility as a classroom teacher to identify who those students are, because in doing so, we can prevent some honorific other event from happening.

But it goes much further than just having a teacher identify. Most of my colleagues, I would say a great portion of them, are able to do, are able to do so, but it goes a step further than that. After identifying who these students are, after putting in a referral into a school social worker, school psychologist, it's about having the resources at the schools to be able to take that referral, analyze, talk with the student, and hopefully bring this young man or young lady to a place where they're not at odds with who they are. Will we save a life because of that? Your guess is as good as mine, but I do believe that we do prevent anything from happening if we have those resources there.

So I hope that in this brief moment in sharing my thoughts with my colleagues around the Circle and sharing the stories of the countless number of individuals in my 43 years that I lived in the City of Bridgeport who have lost their lives, friends, relatives, and on a very sad note, several of my students, former students of mine who have lost their lives on the streets of Bridgeport because of the senseless gun violence.

I believe that this is a proper step. I believe that this is the right thing to do for the State of Connecticut, and, as such, I will be voting in the -- I mean the affirmative, today.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Maynard.

SENATOR MAYNARD:

Thank you, Madam President.

We consider today legislation that was conceived in tragedy and borne out of the hard labor of political compromise, and it's that compromise that I think has led us today to a lot of the discussion and misgivings that some of us feel about the bill. I speak to colleagues with whom, for whom I have the highest regard, and I am so grateful for the opportunity over the last three months to have had, even at different times in the moments of heating dialogue and debate, a mutual respect that was offered to each of us on both sides of the aisle.

I think the tragedy at Newtown left us in its initial days with a -- a sense that we needed to act with a spirit of unity and bipartisanship and that we wanted a bill that would address comprehensively what we thought might be the underlying causes. I think, unfortunately in some respects, the bipartisanship that we have sought and that we are achieving in some measure today also put some of us in a bit of a box as we began to consider what elements of a bill we could all agree upon. And I think it was there that we began to see the challenges of bipartisanship on an issue so emotionally driven.

I come from a part of the state that has a great many rural residents, has a -- a proud gun tradition, and has so many folks who are friends and neighbors, sportsmen, gun owners, folks who really take great pride personally in their safe handling of guns and their knowledge of weapons, in their respect for the rule of law, in teaching those to their children and enjoying hunting and competitions and shooting and also feel a very strong connection to the right to protect themselves personally, either against intruders or against, as they feel might occur in some future time, a -- an oppressive government.

It is their right to feel that. I don't share their same wariness of the government, because I have the great privilege of working within a governmental body. And I know that while we don't always get everything right, we do have the opportunity to change the law,

and undoubtedly will again, as we discuss these issues down the road.

But I understand the misgivings of my neighbors and friends and people from all over the state and, indeed, all over the country who feel very passionately about any erosion of their Second Amendment rights and will defend them as a principle, not because their gun nuts, not because they're some fringe element, but because they hold this deep conviction that this is part of who we are as a people. It was established in the Bill of Rights when we, when we confirmed the Constitution, itself, when it was ratified. So I understand that passion, and I often think, as a Democrat, we also defend hard-won rights as we perceive them.

And I know it's not analogous, except for the underlying right, that we jealously guard a woman's right to choose. After that hard-won battle, Democrats are very wary of giving any ground, even if it seems reasonable, even at something as simple in -- in some states as a, as a 24-hour waiting period, we will not see to any infringement of that right.

And so while I don't share the same doubt and misgiving about an abusive government that my Second Amendment friends do, I understand their passion. I understand their desire not to let government act precipitously and infringe that right without deep reflection and care. We've sought to do that here. I believe our leaders have done an incredible job trying to forge a package that we can have broad bipartisan support. And I believe that they sought with the best of intentions to protect the citizens of this state, particularly our young children in this aftermath of such a horror.

On the other hand, I feel that the process, itself, confined us to a point where I am not comfortable with some provisions of the bill that I feel I don't have a great enough understanding of or a comfort level with what it might mean down the road. I -- I think a bill this large, this comprehensive, and with as many moving parts as it has really deserves more scrutiny than I feel I've had the ability to give it.

Now, there's no question everyone in this room wants to ensure that no tragedy occurs to the lives of any children in this state or any person in this state, similar to the kind of mass shooting that we experienced. I think where, in my view, the bill runs a little off track is that it seeks to address the actions of people determined to inflict harm on others in a mass shooting.

You know, ten of the worst mass murders in the history of the United States were committed by white men under 25 years of age. They're all -- many ended in suicide, and -- and the acts were carried out with a kind of calculated indifference and dispassion that is just hard for us to comprehend. We come to the conclusion that these people must be mentally hill because who but a -- a crazy, mad person could -- could kill people wantonly without cause. And yet it happens over and over again in various parts of our country, perpetrated by people who are not making a political statement so much as acting out in frustration. Perhaps it is a political statement. Who knows the minds of these people; they die, often at their own hand, before we have the opportunity to understand what could have provoked such an attack.

But I believe that our law-abiding citizens who are going to be affected by this bill deeply resent, as I would, the implication that they cannot be trusting with these weapons, that they cannot be trusted to abide by the law, and that somehow the gesture that we're making to hopefully assuage the pain and suffering of those who've been so affected by the shootings in Newtown, that -- that may must give up or be burdened with a new set of requirements and reporting and -- and potential felony convictions, should they choose not to or make some kind of mistake in the future.

I just don't have a comfort level with a bill that goes that far, and I know it's very hard to balance things at -- these things out. We live in a, in a country that respects the rule of law, and we, and we try our -- our very best to respect each other's rights.

I've -- I've operated as a Democrat, again, as I say, under the principle that I would like to pass laws that provide maximum benefit, while preserving maximum liberty.

CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY

SENATE

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SENATOR MAYNARD:

-- and that is a tough balance to achieve very often in this country. And as a member of this body, I feel a much greater level of comfort as, as someone who deals with the law, because I know, as I said at the beginning, that we have the ability to change it.

But I am aware of the discomfiture of those who feel that we may not come back, we may not correct those excesses in this law. And they may see, now or in the future, a diminution of their Second Amendment rights or their right to defend their family or themselves.

So I guess what I'm asking of this body is even if we make the decision today, as we in every likelihood will, to go forward with this bill that we maintain a respect for the rights of those people who think differently about the role of government who are not quite as comfortable with it as we are, who don't feel that it always provides a benevolent protection for them but sometimes may, actually, appear to them as, as something that is intrusive in their lives. And that is their right, as it is ours, to, to believe differently.

While I'd like to join today with colleagues who've worked so diligently to produce this bill, I find myself troubled, as I said, by those aspects of the bill and will be voting no today. The hard work that's gone into this bill though is not without merit. I am deeply committed to future efforts toward greater gun safety and improved mental health access.

And I intend to join with my colleagues as we leave here and go forward either in this session or in future sessions to do that which protects the lives of our children and, and makes the kinds of laws that, that can balance the interests of our, of our citizens against the need for further protection. So I thank you, Madam President, for the opportunity.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Linares.

SENATOR LINARES:

Thank you, Madam President.

I represent 12 towns, 12 beautiful towns, on the Connecticut River and the Connecticut Shoreline. And on behalf of my entire district, I wanted to take a moment to share my thoughts and prayers with the families that were affected by this horrific tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut.

When just making a decision about this bill, ultimately my, my thought was that at some point I'm going to be knocking on the door of a, of a constituent's house and looking in the eyes of a mother with her kids by her side. And ultimately, my decision would be based on whether or not I feel we have done the best work to help prevent another act of evil from horrifying our state.

Today, I will vote no on this bill and stand here for the honest, hardworking, law-abiding citizens that I feel we are, is, this bill is creating unnecessary harm for. I do believe that we need to head in the direction of improving our mental health system in the State of Connecticut. I believe that we missed an opportunity to reform our mental health programs in a responsible and thoughtful way.

As I was sitting here, an e-mail came to me from a constituent. He said, I'm writing to ask for your help. There has been a proposal that will eliminate all grant funding for inpatient and outpatient mental

health programs. That means nearly $3 million in reductions to mental health programs for people in your district. This is not the direction I believe we need to head in in order to prevent another tragedy like this from occurring.

I also feel that never should the voice of the people be silenced. I do have my reservations with the fact that the people have not had a chance to voice their opinion on the final language of this bill. I think that we, more work needs to be done, that we need to focus on mental health, and I stand today in opposition to this bill for those reasons, and I ask my colleagues to follow. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator Fonfara.

SENATOR FONFARA:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise in support of this bill, and I want to thank all those who helped us get us to this point today. Madam President, there are two things that are true, among many things, particularly true about the legislative process. The first is that we rarely act proactively, and the second is that we deal with issues du jour or of the day.

With respect to the tragedy that has brought us here today, we're unable to do anything to address that issue proactively, sadly. But I pray that we do not treat what happened in Newtown and the effects of it as the issue du jour, because, unfortunately, and sadly likely, somewhere in this country, and hopefully I'm wrong on this but maybe even in this state, there exists and likely will exist other Adam Lanzas.

And while this bill and this process never will allow us to prevent fully a repeat of the horror of Sandy Hook or Aurora, Colorado, or Virginia Tech, our charge is to do everything we can to minimize such a thing

from happening again. I think this bill goes a long way in making that effort.

What is the profile, sadly, what is the profile of these individuals, young, angry and withdrawn, some mentally disturbed, maybe a video game watcher, a violent video game watcher, access to firearms, maybe copycatters? Like with suicide, many contemplated, few committed.

But as lawmakers, it is impossible for us to write a law that could identify that, those few individuals that go from contemplation to action. And I believe that it is our responsibility to not treat this tragedy and the results of it as an issue du jour. The mental health aspect of this must continue to be our challenge.

We must find ways to identify those better, the Adam Lanzas of our communities better so that the families who are living with and will live with this tragedy for the rest of their lives will feel at least something, something positive came from it so that others don't have to live with it as well. And I pray that we will continue to work at that aspect of this as we move beyond today. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Boucher, for the second time, and then followed by Senator McLachlan and then Senator Kane.

SENATOR BOUCHER:

Thank you, Madam President.

And for the second time, as was mentioned very often this afternoon, that this has become one of the most polarizing issues that we have faced and that we have 36 Senate seats around this circle, all of them about exactly the same size. And I have to say that the district that I represent with seven towns is probably one of the most polarized in this particular issue and oftentimes in other district, other issues as well.

I might add just as an aside that those individuals that reside in that Senate seat tend to vote maybe 15 to 20,000 more individuals or votes that are cast in many of our elections, which means they're very politically active. And they were never more active than they were on this particular issue. I think many of the busses that came up here on both sides of the issue probably emanated from the 26th District.

I can tell you this, that I, you have all received phone calls and e-mails by the hundreds. We have received them by the thousands. And it's one person, our aide, that's there that's on the front line of these phone calls and these e-mails. And although you strive to get back to everyone, it's become literally impossible to do that given the reaction that we've received.

And I have to say that this issue has touched all of us personally in some way or another. And some of those very children that were in the room next door to the ones where none of the children survived sat with me here in this chair on many an occasion and in cars and in parades. And, fortunately, they survived but not without the kind of emotional damage that those children have received.

And I know that even those that were not immediately there, my next-door neighbors' fifth graders and fourth graders come over regularly and tell me about how they're practicing hiding in their closets to see if they can all fit in their school closets. And one of them said to me she's even tried to fit in her locker, and she can do it. To think that that is what is going through their minds right now is absolutely devastating.

But I also have to speak up on behalf of some parents and family members that have individuals like Adam Lanza in their household, and they live in fear in every day. And I have to speak on behalf as well, because one of my priorities is not just school security, but it's mental health issues.

And I was very torn on the area to spend some time on in delving into this issue and in speaking on behalf of them and the many hospitals that we have in our

state that have told me that their psychiatric units and ERs confront this issue every day where they have the severely mentally impacted and ill individuals that they do not have a place to, to put them at the same time that we, as a state, have closed down mental health facilities that the Mental Health Subcommittee has done a lot of work but has left a big, gaping hole and gap in addressing the serious lack of placement, appropriate placements, in institutions that we have closed for politically correct and, and cost-related reasons.

One of the individuals from one of my districts in Ridgefield called me to talk to me about the fact that their son was also killed by someone that was let out of Fairfield Hills, which was a mental illness facility in Newtown, Connecticut. That patient was mainstreamed and put in a community in Stamford. They ended up burning the apartment where their son resided and was killed. This individual should have had oversight.

Someone should be, have been watching to see that they received their medication. When they were in a facility, they had that oversight. They had that expertise located there. We have to ask ourself as a state, are we going to continue to be politically correct, or are we going to broach this subject in an honest way, and is there a proper place for institutionalization and the issue of involuntary commitment, all of which in this bill becomes a study?

And I understand that there's financial constraints, but we have to address this, and I hope that we do look at this very serious issue in a future session. And also to mention in support of our good, new Senator from Bridgeport, Senator Ayala, he is so right that we have gun violence every single day and every single week in our major cities in Connecticut. It disproportionately affects our minority populations in those cities, and it's something that we can't turn a deaf ear to and eye to. And fortunately, there are some aspects of this bill that do think about that.

I had an interesting experience that maybe some of the others here had as well in the House when we were debating the assault weapons ban when members of the

Clerk's Office would follow me into the ladies' room to say, you know, I live in the inner city in Hartford, and every weekend somebody comes in there with a vehicle full of contraband weapons and opens up the trunk of their car and sells them straight out for cash without any background check, without any permits. And how do we address that? I'm very pleased to see that some of that is in here.

I know that finally what I wanted to talk about was the fact that our founding fathers were actually, and mothers, I might add, were brilliant, brilliant in the aspect that they created three branches of government, the executive branch that proposes, the legislative branch that disposes or decides, and the judiciary, which adjudicates.

And although the Connecticut Constitution gives every citizen the right to bear arms in defense of himself and even the state, the law though also does regulate the sale, the use, and the possession of firearms. And as such, our judiciary, some say that this bill is too far-reaching. It goes too far. Then, in fact, it will be adjudicated, and those aspects that don't pass muster can be struck down as was in New York.

This was quite an effort, and for those that say it was a closed effort, I don't believe it was. I think it was one of the more open that we've had in a long time just judging by the individuals that have come forward, provided testimony, that provided e-mails, calls, all of which we have read and all of which were considered with, with regards to the final product.

Thank you, Madam President. Appreciate the opportunity to just say a few closing remarks.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Senator McLachlan.

SENATOR MCLACHLAN:

Thank you, Madam President.

I was proud to have served on the bipartisan task force that studied the problems following December 14th and was assigned to the School Security Subcommittee where we clearly identified that Sandy Hook Elementary School's procedures, including lockdown, actually saved lives. But the process of our study told us there's much more that can be done.

This bill begins the process of looking carefully at security of our children. But let us be clear that we can't possibly expect our school buildings to become Fort Knox. We should look carefully, much more carefully, though at mental health in our state. We've heard a lot of comments about that today, but it's not proportionately showing in this piece of legislation. And I think that it deserves priority attention.

I must say I am disappointed the bill has created a task force where we really should be leaving the real action, should not be leaving the real action for another day. It's a complicated question. Clearly understood, it's very complicated. How do we address the nightmare of a madman? No question that's a difficult question.

But the professionals in the mental health field have told us and have made it really very clear that one of the major problems in Connecticut is insufficient resources. Senator Linares just mentioned a, an e-mail that he received just today, and I've gotten several of those over the last several days, whereby mental health funding is being dramatically cut. That's a problem.

I also heard many stories of families struggling with challenged children. They were very vocal over the last several months, those families who have lived through apparently what the murderers' family may have lived through, the challenge of how to, to get resources within the system in Connecticut.

Now we have some best practices here in Connecticut. One of them I learned from the Commissioner was something known as assertive community treatment, and that's in this bill today. That's good news. But here's the problem. It's currently in three cities,

and we're only adding three more. We have 169 towns in Connecticut.

Now granted, this is an expensive program that needs to be prioritized, and I understand that. But if we have a best practice like that, let us find ways quickly to use those best practices in a more cost-efficient manner and make it statewide or more readily available than what we're talking about. So we have much more work to do.

Gun control is a very tough topic for everyone in this room today, for the literally thousands of people that I have heard from and tried to communicate with over the last several months who have called my office, my home, my cellphone, e-mails, thousands of people. And I'm just one of 36 Senate districts. And I heard from people across the state. It wasn't just Western Connecticut who was communicating with me. They were calling and writing from all over the state.

It's a very challenging topic and, I must tell you, a painful, sleepless night challenge for me. The major problem that I had with early discussions about gun control here since the task force started working was seizure. There seemed to be a need, and I heard it again today from Senator Meyer, who he and I disagree that illegal seizure is a priority in the Constitution, and we should not be going down that road.

And so I'm thankful that the bill before us today does have the grandfather clause and allows for those responsible gun owners to keep the property that they've bought and paid for. Now that comes with strings, and I understand that. And they're not happy about that either, but that's a balance. That is a balance.

Our State Constitution has very firm rights to bear arms. Some would say that the Connecticut Constitution right to bear arms exceeds that of the United States Constitution. And so I asked questions of a lot of experts in constitutional law. What happens with the legislation before us in a future contest in the court?

I'm told, and this is a matter of opinion that I've gotten from professionals -- I'm not a lawyer, I'm a layperson Legislator, I call myself -- this, I am told this bill will withstand a challenge. And the reason why is that the leadership decided to take out the grandfather, take out the, the seizure part of it and add the grandfather clause to the bill. There are so many more things about this legislation that make so many people uncomfortable, including me.

But I've got to share with you where I was on December 14th. Immediately upon hearing news of this tragedy -- I was in Danbury -- I drove straight to Saint Rose of Lima Church in Newtown where I have friends who are parishioners there, family members who are parishioners there and whose, the pastor, Monsignor Bob Weiss, is someone who I respect a great deal.

So I went to Saint Rose and kneeled down and prayed for hours. And during that period of time in the afternoon, I greeted family members who lost their family member at Sandy Hook Elementary School. And later that day, in the evening, I stayed there and joined the community in a prayer service.

December 14th changed a lot of people's viewpoint on a lot of things, on the preciousness of life, on the priority of our lives, and it certainly affected me in a very great way, quite frankly, more than I would have anticipated, something as emotional as that would have done for me. And so it forced me to take pause and think about this debate in a different way that I never had before.

What I found was that Caroline Phoebe Previdi, who was six years old, a first grader, an adorable young girl whose grandparents and great-grandparents I've known all of my life, was lost that day at Sandy Hook. And that's what I'm talking about, that it forces you to really look at things differently, I, I hope objectively, because under different circumstances, I would look at this bill very differently.

But today I'm supporting this bill in hopes, in hopes that I am properly honoring Carline Phoebe Previdi.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President. If I may, I have a few questions to the proponent of the bill.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

Senator Williams, prepare yourself.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Just a few questions, if I may, Senator Williams. In the bill, it talks about the provision of individuals under the age of 21, and it says that military individuals may use or may be exempt in the use and discharge of their duties.

What about those individuals who may have been, who have served their service through our country, come back, and they're still under 21, possibly -- maybe they were injured, maybe, who knows -- and want to purchase a long gun? These individuals, are they still exempt? I mean, they served our country. They have incredible training in the military. They come back, and they're not able to get a gun without a certificate or a permit.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

Federal law, from what I understand, prohibits them from purchasing a pistol. And in the State of Connecticut, the law before us conforms that to centerfire assault rifles as well.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

So a .22-caliber or a shotgun, that, that would be okay? It's, you know, hunting, that kind of thing. It's just not the centerfire, centerfire.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Through you, Madam President, that's correct.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you for that answer.

On the mental health eligibility verification, it, I think it says that if you were voluntarily in a facility, let's say, it, within six months or involuntary, involuntarily within five years, there

would be this look-back. The, is, is that just a check-off on the application?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

A check-off on the application, you mean if they are attempting to purchase a firearm? Yeah, they would be asked that question, but it's my understanding, and I can double check this, that that information of the commitment at a hospital for psychiatric disabilities, which is the commitment that we're talking about, would be reported to the Commissioner of DMHAS, the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, and that that could also be reported to DESPP --

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

-- which is our public safety agency.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And is that a violation of our HIPAA laws?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Not that I'm aware of.

Madam President, through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

There's also in the bill a gun offender registry, but it says that it is not public record or subject to FOI. And part of the argument that law-abiding gun owners make and I will make and many people will make is that many of the crimes that are committed by, with guns are committed by the bad guys.

And why wouldn't this registry be ethi-liable? I mean, if we have a sex offender registry, and you're able to know if in your neighborhood there is a, a sex offender, why wouldn't we be able to know if someone is a convicted felon with a gun crime? Why wouldn't we have that information available to our public?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Madam President, through you to Senator Kane, the purpose of the registry is to assist law enforcement. So law enforcement has access to this list for the very purpose that you're talking about to be aware of the propensity, not the guarantee, but the propensity of those who have offended in the past in terms of gun crimes to offend again.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Through you, Madam President.

Thank you, but what's the difference between a gun offender registry and a sex offender registry? If, if those are made public, why wouldn't this be made public? I would consider, I don't know, but maybe they're equally as dangerous if not more.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I can only tell the good Senator Kane that the purpose of this was as a tool for law enforcement. It was not discussed in terms of the sex offender list. I suspect if we had discussed that, we might have talked about the different natures of the crime.

In terms of a sex offender list, you're very concerned about whether that person might be around young people in some way. In, in this instance, we are talking about a tool for law enforcement. Whether we want to consider what you are proposing to make this public in the future, that is something that we could certainly consider. Right now, it's for law enforcement.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I, I appreciate that answer. That's, that's, I appreciate that. That's, I think it's important, because we, we're, you know, we're talking about the bad guys here. I think the public has a right to know, so I, I appreciate that answer.

When we talk about the, registering the high-capacity magazines, it's, it, one of the stipulations is that that registration would go to the DMHAS Commissioner.

A, am I right about that, and, B, why would we submit those names to the Commissioner of DMHAS, Department of Mental Health?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

You're talking about the magazines that are in possession now prior to the enactment of this law that would be declared.

SENATOR KANE:

Yes.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Because there has to be a repository for that declaration, and to us, it made the most sense to have that repository in our public safety agency.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I'm not disputing that. I, I believe it says, not in, in addition to Department of Public Safety but DMHAS, Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I suspect that it is a backup registry in terms of the information that would be available to DMHAS and as, as a, a, registry for the Public Safety Department. I think that the DMHAS reference may be important when we look at some of the other potential gun issues regarding what we were just talking about in terms of commitment. Does a person have not only a gun, but does the person in addition have a high-capacity magazine?

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I, I appreciate that answer, but I still don't understand how owning a large-capacity magazine has any connection with mental health and the fact that these individuals' names would be given to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. I can understand the public safety, because public safety, you know, you would have that registration.

But that, that just puts a, an assumption that if an individual owns a large-capacity magazine that there may be a mental health issue as well, and you're submitting the name to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services. And, and I don't, I, I don't know if I, and I can't agree with that, and I don't have to believe that's fair. If, if you want to respond, you're more than welcome, but I can move on, certainly, if you want.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

I'll stand by my previous answer. Thank you, Senator Kane.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

In the list of banned weapons, there is a Colt Match Target rifle. Can you describe what that rifle is?

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

I don't have a photograph in front of me, Senator Kane, so I could not describe that from a photographic point of view.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I guess my question is, is it a target rifle, meaning one that is used for target shooting, one that is used in a, in a range? And I was just curious why that one was on the list.

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you to Senator Kane, all of the guns that are on the list meet the criteria of the physical characteristics test. And that, those are the assault weapons, for the most part designed originally with a military platform, capable of semi-automatic fire and centerfire as opposed to rimfire.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President. And of these rifles that are on this banned list, how many of them are made in Connecticut? Are we aware of how many?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

I am not aware of the precise number.

Through you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

And the OFA analysis, is there any impact on the economic impact this will have on the State of Connecticut, meaning the, the number of manufacturers we have in the State of Connecticut, the number of manufacturing jobs we have in the State of Connecticut, the ancillary businesses who feed those manufacturers in the State of Connecticut? Is there any economic impact in this OFA analysis?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Madam President, not to my knowledge, no.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

That's, thank you, Madam President.

And one last question, if I may, through you. It talks about the statewide trafficking task force, and, and I know that Senator Harp and I have been in agreement in trying to keep that in the budget. It was removed from the budget. Will it be placed in the budget yet again, or are we going to fund this task force?

I know Senator Guglielmo came and testified in front of the Public Safety Committee not too recently and asked for this to be placed back in. So if, if we're going to put this in, in this bill, are we then going to be funding the statewide trafficking task force?

Through you.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

Through you to Senator Kane, yes, in the amount of $1 million.

SENATOR KANE:

Good. Great.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I thank the Senate President for indulging me in answering --

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you.

SENATOR KANE:

-- my questions. I appreciate the answers that you gave. I certainly appreciate the fact that you're willing to work with me on a couple of those questions that I asked you. And hopefully, we can move those discussions forward as, as we progress.

I still believe that we have some very deep questions on the economic impact that this bill is going to have on the State of Connecticut and the great manufacturing that we have here and the history that we have here.

I also, if I may, Madam President, I just want to change gears a little bit, because I, too, have a couple of amendments that I would like to offer to this body, one of which, well, actually, if you don't mind, I'll ask the Clerk to read LCO 5467, and I'd be allowed to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk, will you please call the LCO.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5467, Senate Amendment Schedule "F" offered by Senator Kane.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you. I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on adoption. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR KANE:

I will. Thank you, Madam President.

In the bill -- I believe it's in Section 23, Lines 1008 through 1011 -- it talks about the exemption of police officers in this bill. And I think that's a very good idea, because I've gotten calls, e-mails, Facebook messages from police officers throughout the state who said, you know, these guys put their, these men and women put their lives on the line every day. And they are targets for crime. They are targets for the bad guys.

And it does say in the bill that whether they're on duty or off duty, they are exempt from this bill. However, it doesn't mention retired members of the military and/or police departments. And I still believe that these individuals who have given, you know, ultimate and incredible sacrifices for the State of Connecticut by putting on a badge and, and protecting the citizens of our state are still targets even after they retire. So this amendment simply adds retired officers to that list.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I rise to oppose the amendment. The intention of the exemption is for active members of police departments and the military. The exemption that you're talking about would allow them to purchase or import high-capacity magazines as retired members, so we do

not want to endorse that. I understand your respect for their service. We have great respect for their service, and that's why we have an exemption for active members of police departments in the military.

THE CHAIR:

Will you remark?

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

I would ask for a roll call vote, please.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark? If not, Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote? And the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, if all members have voted, the machine will be closed, and the Clerk will call the tally. Please, please.

THE CLERK:

On Senate Amendment Schedule "F" for Senate Bill 1160,

Total Number Voting	35
Necessary for Adoption	18
Those voting Yea	12
Those voting Nay	23
Those absent and not voting	1

THE CHAIR:

Amendment fails.

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Well, you didn't have to bang that so hard, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

I wanted to wake you up, sir.

SENATOR KANE:

I, I would, if you'll indulge me, I'd like to offer another amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Is that a question?

SENATOR KANE:

It's a promise.

THE CHAIR:

Please proceed, sir.

SENATOR KANE: If, if the Clerk would call LCO 5475, and I'd be allowed to summarize.

THE CHAIR:

Mr. Clerk.

THE CLERK:

LCO Number 5475, Senate Amendment Schedule "G" offered by Senator Kane.

THE CHAIR:

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

I move adoption.

THE CHAIR:

Motion is on adoption. Will you remark, sir?

SENATOR KANE:

I will. Thank you, Madam President.

This amendment comes to me from a constituent of mine who is very knowledgeable on this issue and on the Second Amendment and, and the different guns that are out there. And it was actually very interesting meeting with this gentleman many times, because he provided me with a great deal of education on this issue.

The idea, Madam President, if you look at Sections 54 through 56 of the bill, it talks about safe storage. And what we've done is we've added individuals who may not be legally able to possess a, a weapon and if you know of someone who is possibly a felon or what have you. So I think the idea for all of us, right, around this circle, is we want safety. We want more people to be careful, mindful, and protective of their guns. So what we want, ladies and gentlemen, is more safe storage.

Now in the bill, it says what a person would consider, consider reasonable. And we talked about this in caucus, and we says, well, if you have a, a two-year-old, then you could put it up on a shelf, you know. But in my mind, maybe that's not reasonable. Maybe to you it is. Maybe to the next person it isn't. What I would like to see is individuals go out and buy safes and safe storage and lock these weapons up if they are in possession of them, because we know how many accidents happen.

However, that is quite a burden on these individuals, because these safes, this storage, lockboxes, if you will, cost hundreds of dollars if not thousands of dollars. What this amendment would do is provide incentive for people to go out and purchase these safes by giving them a tax credit on their personal income tax return.

So we're going to say to you, John Q. Public, we want you to be safe. We want your children to be safe. Please go out and get us a lock box or some kind of safe, store it properly, and we will give you a tax credit, a simple tax credit on your personal income tax return that will create a great incentive for more safety. After all, that's why we're here today, is to provide better safety for our constituents in the State of Connecticut. And when it does come to a vote, I would ask for roll call.

Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kane.

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I again rise to oppose the amendment. Folks who have dangerous weapons also have responsibilities to safeguard those weapons. And it's not appropriate to ask the rest of the people of the state to pay for that through a tax exemption. So, Madam President, I would oppose this.

I would also further note that the way the lockbox is defined is also vague enough to include someone's safe for not just firearms but for all sorts of other valuables. Madam President, this is the wrong road to go down, and I would oppose the amendment.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, will you call for a roll call vote, and the machine will be open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators, please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

Have all Members voted? All Members have voted. The machine will be closed.

And, Mr. Clerk, will you call for the tally, please.

THE CLERK:

On Second Amendment Schedule "G" for Senate Bill 1160,

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary for Adoption	19
Those voting Yea	12
Those voting Nay	24
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

Amendment fails.

Senator Kane.

SENATOR KANE:

Thank you, Madam President.

I did want to offer a couple things that I thought would make the bill a little bit better. Obviously, we can continue those conversations as the session moves on. As everyone in this circle, I have had many, many meetings on this subject.

And, in fact, you know, I tell my, my daughter, who's six, when she asks, well, where are you going today, because I, I went on Sunday morning, I went on Saturday morning, I, I've been all over the district, and she said, where are you going? I said, to another meeting on guns? And I said, yeah. My daughter recommended that all guns be replaced by Nerf guns. So that's her recommendation. And it's not a bad idea, but --

THE CHAIR:

Is that an amendment, sir?

SENATOR KANE:

Yeah, yeah, I, I would, I would like to make that amendment. But in, in all honesty, it has taken all of us away from everything that is, is taking place in, in the Legislature, the, the budget and all the other bills that are taking place during this Legislative Session. And, of course, it's important that we be here today and that we solve this issue once and for all so we can maybe start looking at the budget and the budget deficit that we have.

As you know, I serve a nearby town, and, and Southbury is part of my district, which is a neighboring of Newtown. In fact, I have a bill in the Public Safety Committee that just got out of the Public Safety Committee in regards to active shooter incidents and the communication that takes place between police departments. And I think it will go a long way to help police departments respond to these type of incidents.

But you also know, Madam President, that my wife is a clinical psychologist. And she was in Newtown right from minute one. And she got a call at her organization that said there was a gun at a elementary school. And not knowing what is taking place, she went down there, because she thought maybe a, a child had a gun, or there was an incident of a person with a gun. And she was there to provide counseling and support to the children, to the teachers, to the families.

When she had gotten there, she had no idea what was taking place but certainly spent the day, Senator McKinney, yourself, Governor, and was assigned to one of the families of the victims. And she stayed there Friday until 3:00 in the morning and went again on Saturday, went again on Sunday, was there all week with this family that she was assigned to with a state trooper and a person from the clergy, and that was another thing I had to educate my children on. Why,

why isn't Mom home on the weekends? She never works on the weekends. Where is she?

So she spent a great deal of time in Newtown with the families of this tragic event. She also spent a great deal of time with the teachers and the first responders subsequently and has recently been down there as this past week. And it's been a very difficult situation in our household, certainly, because of the type of response that her and her team have given to the people of Newtown. So I've struggled with this since December 14th.

And as a lot of people mentioned, we were here doing the deficit mitigation, and all you knew was what you saw on the news. And, but what I did was I agreed to meet with people on the issue. And I agreed to meet with members or constituents of the 32nd District and even beyond sometimes, whether it be locally or here or wherever. And I wanted to educate myself on the bill, because I don't want to just look at it from an emotional standpoint, but I want to look at it from a logical standpoint.

And one of the biggest things I've heard from many people is that we need to enforce the laws that we currently have, because many, many crimes are committed by people who do bad things and are bad people, not the good guys who are law-abiding citizens who want to protect their family or protect the Second Amendment and protect their rights. So what we need to do is start looking in the mirror and start looking at the laws that we have in place, and why not make sure that we enforce those laws to the nth degree?

The last thing we want to do here today, ladies and gentlemen, is give people a false sense of security that once we slap this paper down, that's it, there will be no further Newtowns, there will be no further Virginia Techs, there will be no Columbines and what have you. That's not true, because you can't stop evil, and you can't stop evildoers. So whatever we do here today, let's not pretend to the public of the State of Connecticut that we have solved the issue, because I don't believe we have.

When we talk about the issue of guns, we took action, right? We said, all right, we're going to ban this, do this, do this, do this. When we talk about mental health, we created a task force. And let's talk about the real problem in the State of Connecticut and in the United States of America. It's the societal problems that we have in our families and in mental health with a whole host of different issues.

So rather than we take action on one particular portion of this bill, let's take action on all of it. Let's talk about the real issues that are affecting our society and why we are going in a direction that none of us would like to see. I, I participated on the Mental Health Subcommittee, and I appreciated what Senator Harp said and how we sat there for 12 hours, and it was well-participated.

But did we go enough? Did we do enough? You know, did we really attack the problem, which is the mental health in our state? We need, as Senator Linares stated, to be funding more programs and to be not looking at cuts in social services or certain areas that we can really help. So instead, we're going to say, we're going to ban this, ban this, ban this, because that's the real issue. It's not, folks. It's not.

The real issue is our society and how far it has dropped and where we're going with it. So let's not kid ourselves. Let's make sure that the way we prevent another tragedy is to, by really looking at the, in the mirror and looking at society as a whole.

So for those reasons, Madam President, although I can tell you that my wife certainly won't be happy with my vote, but I will tell you that I don't believe we've done enough in mental health to solve this problem, yet, are looking at one portion and not the whole thing. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Kane.

Senator Harp.

SENATOR HARP:

Thank you very much, Madam President.

I'm sure you know that I stand to support this bill, but I, I want to talk a little bit about experiences that I had as a child. When I was eight years old, I had a classmate who sat a couple of seats behind me in the opposite row. And in my school, in the third grade, they wanted kids to dance with each other. And there was only one person who would dance with me, and that was the guy that sat behind me in the row. His name was Myron Hanson.

And so Myron Hanson was a, a lot taller than me, but most people probably were at that time, a hazel-eyed kid with spiky blonde hair, I guess a crew cut. That's what kids had back then. And he was also one of the kids who would play with me on the playground, so Myron was someone that I knew. We talked about, we had a lot of fun with our group of friends.

So one day after a long weekend, I came back to school only to learn from our principal who came into our classroom to tell us that Myron Hanson had been killed. And he had been killed accidentally, because he and his cousin went into their grandfather's house and got the hunting rifle that the grandfather had, took it into the barn and were playing with it, and he was accidentally shot and killed.

And so the thing that I remember the most about the third grade, the only name I remember is Myron Hanson. And so I know that we've heard about the families. They will be traumatized. But what I think about are all of the children in that school who knew one of the children, who knew those teachers. They will be my age decades later seeing those faces, remembering those names.

And I've got to tell you, one of the things that I learned in doing the mental health task force is that there are these things that they have now identified called adverse childhood events. What happened to our classroom with Myron Hanson was an adverse childhood event.

They basically say that if you have, and those are traumatic events, if you have more than three of those before the time you become an adult -- and they've studied this with actually middle-class populations in California -- they have discovered that people who have had more than three -- if you think about how many you could have in a lifetime before you're an adult -- that you are more likely as an adult to have a chronic illness, that your life expectancy is shorter and so that these traumatic events are really, really important.

And as a society, we have not figured out yet how to deal with them. But I've got to say that like Senator Kane's wife, there are so many of our child guidance clinics that have been in Newtown helping the families but also helping the children who have suffered through and will suffer through for the rest of their life this experience. So I just want to set that aside, because this is something that will live with them forever. And those are names and faces that they will remember forever, I know.

I wanted to just say something about guns. And I know in our caucus -- and we heard this at the hearing turned in another way -- that -- and I think Senator Williams shared this story -- that right around the time this happened in Newtown, there was a person who went and attacked a classroom full of children in China with a knife. No one died.

What we learned is that of all the gun deaths in the nation, most of them are not homicides. Only a third of them are. Two-thirds of them are suicides. And they are not the people that we think of as sick in the same way that the shooter in Newtown was sick. These are people who are depressed. And as you know, depression is something even, that is very difficult to get help for in our state.

And the thing that makes guns different, we learn, is the lethality of them. You know, you can be a cutter, and you can survive from that, but if you shoot that gun accidentally, as my friend Myron shot that gun, it is lethal. And so it really is something that ought to be respected. It is a privilege that ought to be respected and handled with care.

Now about five years ago, we -- and I guess it started as long ago as eight years ago -- we engaged in an effort to raise the age of juvenile jurisdiction. What did we learn during that time? We learned that Connecticut did not have an agency or a system of mental health services for 16- and 17-year-olds.

There was not one agency that was responsible for that. The Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services was responsible for people who are 18 years and over. The Department of Children and Families largely took care of children up to about 15. So you had this gap that existed until, I guess we actually just implemented the 17-year-olds recently. And so there was no mental health delivery system for them. There still isn't now.

During the hearings, and I think a lot of my colleagues were really shocked to find we were one of the first states in this country to implement mental health and substance abuse parity. And it was, when we debated that, there were those who said to us, be careful what you ask for, because you may lose access to mental health care. And the reality is that we did.

And one of the things that this bill is trying to do is to assure that what we thought we have we will actually have, because it was said time and time again during the hearing that you had to almost make yourself poor to get access to the best mental health services. They either occurred in the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services or in DMHAS. The things that helped the most commercial insurance won't pay for.

The other thing that we learned was that because there's no real place to get paid from, we don't have adequate numbers of child psychiatrists. And that's why you see the access mental health initiative in the bill. So, yes, we have a long way to go to build an adequate mental health delivery system. There are a lot of reasons for that.

And, yes, there were cuts in the proposal that was made to us, but we can together do something about

that as that bill rolls forward. And, yes, there was not a lot in this bill, but there are opportunities to begin to embellish that system as we move forward on the budget.

But what is important about this bill is that it represents to the people, to the children whose lives are forever changed, the ones who will live this, with this for the rest of their lives, that we intend to ameliorate the conditions as best we can.

Is it perfect? Absolutely not. But does it reflect our care, our concern, and our worry for the people of this state? Does it reflect our concern for their safety? Does it reflect an intent to build a system that is fragile at best? It does. And I would say to you that vote with me on behalf of the children who will live with this horrific scene in their mind for the rest of their lives.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator Osten.

SENATOR OSTEN:

Thank you, Madam President.

I find myself today in a quandary. I plan on voting no on this piece of legislation. And I've thought about it ever since December 14th knowing that I had been elected and would be sitting in this room with legislation that would try to address a tragedy that happened to children.

And I would very much like to say that the package before us here today would make changes so that no one would have to see another dead six-year-old, that no one would have to respond to a tragedy as significant that happened down at Sandy Hook. But this legislation does not provide that protection, in my opinion.

It puts at risk legal gun owners, the constituents in the 19th District, many of whom have reached out to me

in rural Connecticut. It puts at risk those people who purchase weapons for their own use whether through hunting or in competitions or just as hobbyists. And they have that right by our Constitution. The Second Amendment in Connecticut's Constitution is clear that people have the right to bear arms.

I forever fight for the rights that are implicit in our Constitution. Freedom of speech and freedom of religion are two that I also hold very dear to my heart. We have already enough rules on the books today. Some of you may not know it, but I worked in the Department of Correction for 21 years. I saw people come back year after year after year. They plea bargained away the gun charges that were already put against them.

We can create a registry of those who commit crimes with deadly weapons, but if we don't find them guilty of weapons charges, the registry will remain empty. It's terrible to sit, stand here today and say that there will be children who will forever have effects against them. This is not a new phenomenon.

We have children and families that are being damaged every day in, in our urban cities, and today, this piece of legislation does nothing to stop handguns and young men from killing other young men. I'd like to stand here and say that we're going to correct all the ills of the world with those who use weapons illegally, but I believe that this piece of legislation attacks the legal gun owners and those who have them for their own protection.

We have a clear problem with mental health in this state that we have not addressed for years. And while this holds a little bit of promise for something to happen in the future, the problem is expensive. We currently use our prison system every day to house those that judges cannot find another place for.

As a matter of fact, about 20 to 25 percent of the inmate population is chronically mentally ill. Because we have no other spot for them, we have our correctional officers and those in, those staff who work there handling people with mental illness on a

daily basis. And if our population is in the 20,000 range, that's 5,000 people.

I would very much like to say today that what you have crafted here -- and I know you worked very hard on it -- it's clear that people put their minds and their hearts into this legislation -- but I do believe it gives people a false sense of security here. I don't think it stops those people who have chosen to act out badly.

Adam Lanza and his family were troubled. We ignored that for many years. Other people knew that family was troubled. It's clear just by the report that they knew that family was troubled. Adam Lanza was the one who killed those 20 young children and those six adults. He's the one we should hold accountable today, not the legal gun owners in this state.

There are things in this bill that I could support, but there are many things in this bill that I cannot based on what my constituents have said to me. People have a right to bear arms, and we already have enough restrictions on them, and we do not need any more. I also cried when those young children died that day, as every one of us around here did.

And if I could assure those parents that this legislation would stop it from happening again, I would vote yes. That is not the truth. I look forward to working with this body as we move forward to stop plea bargaining of gun charges so that we can hold those people accountable over and over again.

I'm very proud of standing here today. As a Vietnam era veteran, I'm so proud of our country, but I also know that we protect our company, our country with that very basic right, that right to bear arms. I've sat here today and listened to everyone that's spoken, and you've all spoken from the heart. I also speak from the heart, and I believe with all my heart that this is not the right way to go. I think this bill should have had another public hearing so we could have heard yet one more time with exact language what people needed to say. It would have been a week or so more. That's not a bad thing.

We can't make our schools into prisons. We want our children to flourish. We don't want them to be afraid to go to school. I worked in that prison environment for 21 years. I think that you can make our schools safer. Please don't make them into prisons. They'll be impacted, as I have been, as all my colleagues have been that worked in that system.

I, today, stand in opposition to the bill here, as I have said all along I would, representing the constituents in the 19th District, representing those legal gun owners, representing corrections officers and police officers from around the state who have contacted me and respecting each and every one of you for the opinions that you hold. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you. Will you remark?

Senator Witkos.

SENATOR WITKOS:

Thank you, and good evening, Madam President.

I want to preface my remarks by offering my condolences once again to the families of the Newtown victims and not only to the families of the Newtown victims but to the victims of everyone who's suffered a needless loss to gun violence in our big cities, which we hear about almost on a weekly basis.

I'd also like to offer my, my thanks to all the members of the, the different task forces, the working groups. I think they carried out their duties with dignity, countless hours listening to testimony from everybody that came to Hartford and down in the town of Newtown. I'd also like to offer thanks to the leaders and the time that they put in negotiating the final aspects of the bill.

It certainly was a struggle to try to achieve balance. And the balance I talk about is the balance of making sure that we do something productive in the State of Connecticut while guarding the rights of others. I'd also like to thank the manufacturers and the citizens

who took days off from work to come up and testify numerous times.

Imagine, it's not something to gloat about, what did you do on vacation? Well, I spent my day at the State Capitol two and three times testifying in front of a legislative panel. I, myself, served on two of the working groups, School Safety and Gun Violence. I also sat through hearings on the Public Safety Committee. But I didn't think that was enough, because I didn't see a lot of my constituents here.

So I held my own gun hearing in my district. It went for six hours. And I sat across the table from my constituents, giving them the opportunity to speak to me and speak their mind. I also received over 7,000 e-mails since December 15th on this topic from in-state residents and over the past two days over 100 phone calls. But all of this is in the name of good government, I would say.

But what I find to be distasteful are the comments of folks that say, ignore the people on the fringe. We're saying to ignore the people that we were chosen to represent here in Hartford, and I don't believe that's right. All they're asking at times is to see and read the bill. And I ask you, is that too much to ask for?

I know we can say we've had a public hearing on different parts of the bill, and it's been in through different committees. But the sum of the parts don't necessarily mean the whole of the bill. It could be taken out in a different context.

So I thought personally that Senate Bill 1160 should have been out there for the public to read its, in its entirety and offer comments too. I wouldn't have minded another 7,000 e-mails, honestly. But when I read through the bill, and I did read the bill, I thought the root cause was barely mentioned, and that was mental health.

Yes, we formed a task force to look at some case management of up to 100 people in probation. And we created a consultation and care coordination program. But we didn't get to the two words that I felt were so

prevalent in all the hearings, which was access and control. From speaker to speaker to expert to novice, it was all about access and control.

We did a couple access and control items. We created a safe storage provision in the bill, and we offered a five-year look-back for, of mental health illness, but that's it. I wish we could have done something on psychotropic drugs. I wish we could have done something to work with a task force with our federal legislative delegation to loosen up the HIPAA regulations so our agencies can talk to each other, so if somebody is aware of something that's happening, they have the ability to communicate that.

As I said, I sat down face to face with my constituents for over six hours. And as they came up to the table, they said, I want you to oppose everything, some people did. And I said, well, let's wait a minute. Let's talk about somebody just opposing everything. Do you support universal background checks? Well, yes, I do.

What about if you, if we created a, the provision that's in the bill that says you have to show an identification to buy ammunition, because what I'm told, the big mayors, the big-city mayors that came up said that's the problem in their inner cities. They buy the guns on the black market, but they don't necessarily get the ammunition. So if we can control the flow of the ammunition, maybe we can prevent some of the inner city deaths.

And as I explained myself, they said, well, I, I guess I can support that too. And then we were going down through the items, and they said, well, we can support that. So I said, there is common ground, but we just need to give them the opportunity to have that conversation.

And then somebody said to me something that I hadn't thought of from that perspective before. It was about technology. They said, Kevin, how many people do you know use wooden golf clubs on the golf course anymore? Well, they're aluminum. How many people use a wooden tennis racquet? That was graphite. How many people ski with wooden water skis? Those are fiberglass.

And then I said, well, you know, obviously, the next question would be, well, those don't kill people. They said, well, Kevin, automobiles, they used to, when they first were created, they used to run ten miles an hour. Now they can go 150 miles an hour. And drugs, years ago, it was marijuana, but now it's crack cocaine.

And, yes, even guns have evolved with technology, from the single-shot black powder musket to today's modern sporting rifle. You know, it changes so quickly. When I started in law enforcement 28 years ago, I carried a six-shot revolver with double speed loaders. People probably don't even know what a double speed loader is. And when I retired, I was carrying a .40-caliber semi-automatic Smith and Wesson.

Nobody can foresee the future, because we don't know where technology is going to bring us in ten to 15 years from now. But this bill attempts to address that through cosmetic limitations. And I ask you, if you happen to put makeup on, when you look in the mirror, you begin the makeup process, you know what it does? It changes your appearance, but it does not change who you are.

And that's what we're attempting to do here with the limiting of the cosmetic features on these weapons. If you use the same caliber of bullet, excuse me, if you use the same caliber of a bullet, you'll have the same velocity and the same penetration. The only thing you're changing is what it looks like and how you hold it.

The bill further attempts to limit gun ownership. And I say to you that your actions and the actions of the media have caused gun ownership to increase. How often do we see on the 6:00 news lines at the gun stores and the retail outlets and the empty spaces on the shelf? That's a direct cause of the action of this Legislature.

During my hearing I had in my district, I had a manufacturer come up to me and said, you know, Kevin? He goes, I manufacture the springs in these magazines. I've sold more springs in the past four months than I

have in the past four years, because there's a buying spree, because people are afraid. The lines are being created by law-abiding citizens, because criminals don't wait in lines, nor do they follow the law.

You know, I asked the tough questions of both the opponents and the proponents during the public hearings to see if what we did would have any impact. And sadly, both sides agreed that it won't. Ownership without banning allows the magazines to stay in the population. And requiring only ten rounds in a 30-round magazine focuses on law-abiding citizens, something that we all know a criminal will never, ever follow.

In closing, there are a lot of great things in the bill, and I wish I could be casting a yes vote today. And it's the two issues in the bill that I have difficulty with, and those were the two issues that took the longest time, I believe -- though I was not in the room -- that caused the negotiations to get us to where they are today. And that is the assault weapon expansion and the high-capacity magazine.

And during my time in my hearings, people would come up to me and say, where do you stand on the Second Amendment? And I'd say, well, what do you mean? And more people carried around a pocketbook of the Constitution. They'd flip to open a page, and they'd start reading the Second Amendment. My comment to them were, don't tell me something from 1791.

Look to the most recent case in 2008 in the Heller versus D.C. case, because it was the United States Supreme Court that analyzed the Second Amendment and offered an opinion. And in their opinion, they said that the government has the right to say who can own guns, where they can carry them, and what types of guns can they carry.

So they had me thinking, well, maybe I will be supporting this bill, because if that's the most recent ruling, it's not an infringement upon the Second Amendment rights of our citizens that is so profoundly spoken. But then I started doing a little research, and I found out that as recent as last

Friday there's over 1.28 million guns registered in the State of Connecticut.

And those are only the number of guns that are registered, that there are many, many long guns that were purchased that never had to be registered. So I would, I think it would be fair to say that it would probably be closer to two million. And somewhere during the hours and hours of testimony, I heard that there were 154,000 AR-15's.

So I thought to myself, if there's 154,000 AR-15's registered in the State of Connecticut, maybe five percent, how, how does that dovetail into what was ruled in the Heller versus D.C. case? Now I told you they said they, they can state who has them, where they have them, and what types.

But it went on further to say the who are the folks that are convicted felons and folks with mental illness, the where, government has a right to create gun-free zones in our schools, in our municipal buildings, and on the what types, government has the right to ban guns that are not in common use at that time. That's where my difficulties lay. Is five percent considered common use at that time? I probably could go either way on that one.

But the one part that I could not overcome was the high capacity magazines, because I know that almost every handgun and every long gun that can be sold has a magazine capacity greater than ten. And it has been around a long, long time. Therefore, that I consider to be in common use.

And I believe by us passing this bill today, we are creating a direct violation of the Constitution. It was said that the tree of liberty shall be pruned at times to make it stronger, but I say to you that once you start pruning the roots of the tree, the tree of liberty will suffer a withering death.

Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator. Will you remark? Will you remark?

Senator Fasano.

SENATOR FASANO:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, I debated whether or not to speak tonight, and, because we've been here for so long, but I'm going to approach this perhaps in a little different method. And this is the reason why I have decided to speak.

Madam President, when the Newtown issue tragedy struck our state, we began to be polarized literally that day and days after. People were clinging to sides and talking about these gun issues before we even had the chance and the opportunity to mourn those that were lost at Newtown. And as time went on, we did mourn, but then there came time that we realized, and all of us in this circle know that everyone is going to be looking at us, State of Connecticut, the Legislature, to determine what to do.

And what it seemed to me was happening was in Washington, D.C., they were doing nothing. There was a lot of finger pointing. There was a lot of discussion and press conferences, but there was no talking. There was no communicating. And I think it what's abundantly clear to this Legislature is we need not to follow what Washington did, and that takes courage. That takes courage.

The leaders of the Senate, the leaders of the House, the six leaders, got together and said, at the very least, let's start with a public hearing, and let's do it bipartisan and see what we have out there and listen. And then from those parts, Republicans and Democrats, core beliefs on all sides, let's see what we can put together, if possible.

And after the public hearings, now some may argue that when we had those hearings -- and I was not part of those committees except for the, when we went down to Sandy Hook -- but some may argue, well, that's your

job to be in those hearings. And I, I, and we're elected. That's what you voluntarily decide to do.

I agree with that in part, but I would suggest an argument can be made that many folks around this circle and in the House went above and beyond the call of duty to stay 14, 16 hours during a hearing to hear every single person that came to speak. And for those Legislators and all, most of us in the circle who did that, I think that's important. And they didn't just disappear. Legislators sat there through those hearings taking copious notes so that they could formulate ideas, which they gave to leaders.

The bill we have in front of us is a culmination of that, but there were other steps, because when those ideas got to the leaders, the leaders had to decide what they were going to do. And their choice was either stay with the core beliefs that could bifurcate a nation and started bifurcate our state or try to find common ground, which means certain core beliefs would have to be left to the wayside.

And I congratulate the leaders, because each of them, to be at that table, had to give up something they believe in to reach a common ground. Is this the perfect solution? No. Are you ever going to draft any legislation that's going to stop another Sandy Hook? I suggest never, no matter what you do. Unfortunately, it's the society that we live in, and it's sad. It's sad we're even having a conversation about 20 kids being killed in a school, sad.

But to reach common ground, you have to have the will to say, we have to unite the state, and we have to bring essential values together, and that's what these leaders did. Now there are a variety of amendments around this floor. And part of reaching a compromise is to be devoted to that work ethic and that compromise.

I voted against a number of my colleagues' amendments. Had it not been on this bill, I would have supported my colleagues' amendments. But when leadership and others give their word that they're going to support a bill that brings a common ground to this Chamber, then

you cannot say, but I will support amendments to that common ground.

So I voted no on those amendments, because we came to a conclusion. Once again, it's not perfect, and that's why I voted against those amendments, not that they were not good ideas, not that they did not have validity, but in this building, you have one thing, and that is your promise and your word. And if you don't have that, you have nothing.

This bill is going to get criticized by many for a variety of reasons coming from a variety of levels. One thing they can't criticize is our work ethic, our ability to listen to our constituents, take in what we heard, and for our leadership, House, Senate, Democrat, and Republicans, to be able to come together and work on probably one of the hardest if not the hardest problem to face -- I'll talk for myself, for me -- for the last 12 years and I would suggest for this Chamber in who knows how many years.

We can disagree, because that's what this Chamber is about. If I had a criticism, I do agree that the mental health issue, which is complicated, and we are doing a task force on it, has to come through at the end of the day. Are we going to find some glitches that have to be fixed? Yes, we will.

Some people we, said we went too fast. Others say we went too slow. Without a doubt, there isn't a person in this Chamber who can't say we felt pressure to do something. And that pressure mounted, and we did the best we could. So, Madam President, I plan on supporting this bill. I think it's the right thing to do. Thank you.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator Fasano.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

I'm rising to speak in support of the bill. Madam President, parts of this bill are a culmination of 20 years of debate and discussion dating back to the original assault weapons ban that was passed in 1993. And, of course, the issue of assault weapons is only, is only a part of what's in this comprehensive package.

Some of the provisions of the bill were actually approved by this State Senate in 2001, including adding the Bushmaster assault rifle that was used by Adam Lanza at Sandy Hook school, adding that weapon to the list of assault weapons that are banned from future sale or required to be registered. That was in that, in that bill, as was the ban on large capacity magazines.

That was a, a bill that many of us were proud to support and the State Senate passed in 2001. Unfortunately, it was not passed by the House of Representatives that year. But that was also a bipartisan vote, just as we are hoping to have a bipartisan vote this evening. And Senator McKinney showed great leadership then in supporting that bill as he has shown throughout this whole process in working for consensus on this one.

Then Senator Nickerson, Freedman, Gennaro, and Aniskovich were all supporters of that, of that bill, and it was a, a strongly supported bipartisan bill in the Senate. Other provisions in this bill are, are more recently advocated, and that is the, the issue of the Violent Weapon Offender Registry, which has been pushed by a number of urban Legislators for several years at the request of urban police chiefs, the expansion of the permit process for ammunition and for long guns, as well as universal background checks.

These are issues that have been debated for several years in one form or another in the General Assembly and have come forward to be included in this, in this comprehensive bill. In addition, in terms of the, the discussions of the, of the six leaders after the conclusion of the work of, of the task force, I certainly wanted to second what Senator Fasano said, that there was a, a great deal of good will and genuine good faith in all of those discussions.

And, certainly, as I said earlier, Senator Williams deserves enormous credit for his leadership in keeping us on task as does Speaker Sharkey and, but Senator McKinney and Representative Cafaro I think also deserve great credit for their work in that, in that process, the, the willingness to find consensus, the willingness to, to move from, from prior positions, the willingness to look for common ground. All of us worked together.

My counterpart, Representative Arasimowicz, the House Majority Leader, and I, we're also very proud and very pleased to be part of that, of that process. And it was one that when we finally came to conclusion, we were, in fact, proud of the result and hoping that we would have a result here that would be a model for the nation, a model of bipartisanship and not reflecting the, the very destructive divides that we see in other states and in the United States Congress.

Much discussion has been made this, this evening of, of the mental health portions of the bill and the fact that, that some of it relates to a, a study of the, a task force with a special focus on 16- to 25-year-olds to study Connecticut's mental health system. And that is true, there is that task force, but there are also substantive provisions in the bill that address mental health as well.

Requiring the insurance department to evaluate and report on its method for determining compliance with state and federal mental health parity laws, that is a, that is a requirement, not just a, a subject of future study. Requiring that certain mental health and substance abuse services be considered urgent care requests and shorten the review time of those from 72 hours in current law to 24 hours, that is an important change, also instituting a more robust definition of clinical peer with regard to the review of mental health and substance abuse services to ensure that the health professionals who review the claim have similar qualifications to the health professional who prescribed the treatment, also designating disorder treatment criteria for mental health and substance abuse so that coverage decisions are, in fact, more consistent from carrier to carrier, and consumers are

given a clear reason for a denial when there is a denial, requires insurers also to inform consumers that they have the right to appeal a denial and that they can request additional information and can contact the Office of Health Care Advocate for assistance.

In fact, Madam President, one of the, the commentators on the mental health portions of the bill was our health care advocate, Victoria Veltri, who described this as a very strong and bold piece of legislation that includes many more protections for consumers than ever existed before in the state, she said. And she also added that the bill adds a level of transparency that never existed before.

So this is a very important step forward, not just, in effect, a, a promise for future study but a substantive change that we are all looking to implement now. So this is a very important bill on so many fronts, Madam President, that, that I certainly am, am proud to support this evening. I think it is historic legislation for our state and for our nation and urge support of the bill this evening.

And one final, just one final note, Madam President, a word of special thanks and commendation I think should go to, to Joel Rudikoff, our counsel who has been working on these issues for so many years, was a, a advisor to then Majority Leader George Jepsen on the, on the, the 2001 legislation.

And obviously, there was a, there was staff of all four caucuses in the meetings with the, with the six leaders, but, but Joel, in so many ways, was the, was the key person in terms of staff because of the fact on the, on the gun-related issues that he has been living with this and working with this for, for so long.

So, so, Madam President, on so many fronts, this is an important bill that we need to support this evening that comes to us out of the terrible, the crucible of the tragedy of Newtown. But it is something that gives us something of which we can be proud not only of the end result but also of the process that got us here. Thank you, Madam President.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Senator McKinney.

SENATOR MCKINNEY:

Thank you, Madam President.

Madam President, like many in this circle, perhaps downstairs in the House and around the State of Connecticut, as I stand here today, I'm brought back to December 14th. I started that morning going to a meeting in Bridgeport, actually, I'm sorry, in Fairfield, with a group of nonprofits from Bridgeport and the Greater Bridgeport area about concerns they had over some budget cuts.

And after the meeting, I got into my car and saw a news alert on my phone that there had been reported a shooting in a school in Newtown, Connecticut. And for some reason, I turned my car around and headed up to Newtown.

Other things have happened during the 14-plus years I've been fortunate to serve in this Senate, but I've never driven to that type of an event. When bad things happen, I think it's best for elected officials to stay away and let the public safety officials do what they need to do. But there was something that told me I needed to go.

When I arrived, the scene was unlike anything I had ever seen before, and I parked my car in downtown Sandy Hook, because the police had blocked off streets. And as I, not running, but walking fast up to the firehouse, parents were walking by with their children, some holding them, some holding their hands, many crying.

I got to the firehouse, and the first person I saw was Pat Llodra, who's been a friend for many years and is an incredible woman and the first selectman of Newtown. And she informed me privately off to the side of what was the initial report given to her from

the public safety officials, which was a conversation I won't forget. It was actually an initial report that was worse than what happened. But I knew then that my life had changed, as had so many others.

And seeing the parents that day, parents who had reconnected with their children and then parents who, who did not, the teachers and school administrators who were in the firehouse, state and local police officers, volunteer and professional firefighters, emergency service personnel, EMS from all over the State of Connecticut, clergy from all different faiths but especially Father Bob, Monsignor, Robert Weiss, as Senator McLachlan mentioned, and just the community of Newtown and then my phone ringing off the hook and text messages from colleagues around the circle and in the House.

I said the other day in Danbury, and I'll say again, Mike McLachlan has been a second state senator for Newtown since December 14th, and I appreciate his words and, and more his prayers for the people in Newtown. And since then, I've been working, as have others, especially with my colleagues in the House, Representative Hovey and Representative Bolinsky and Representative Carter, yourself, the Governor, and others, to see what we can do to heal that community, if we can do anything, what we can do to make Connecticut safer, and what we can do to hope that this is a one-time event that never happens again.

I've said that this issue for me is something that should be and is above politics. We have all talked, and I, I have not been shy in the past in this circle about talking about my frustration with the partisanship of our politics today.

We are all elected to come to our government to see what we can do to make Connecticut better. And we all come representing diverse citizens across the state with different ideas and different ideologies. And no one should put their principles down, but everyone should try to work with each other to see if we can find common ground.

And I'm proud that we've done that on what is in my 14-plus years the most important issue that I've had

to deal with. Keeping people safe, protecting our citizens, is a core function of what we do, and that's what we're trying to accomplish in the bill before us. And I also hope the message that we can send -- if those outside the walls of Connecticut are listening -- is to encourage them to do the same, encourage our elected officials in Washington to put aside the politics and try to see if they can work with one another to find some common ground.

I have been, not surprised, heartened by the immense citizen involvement in this issue. I have received more e-mails and phone calls and text messages, I think. Starting on Monday, I've received over 500, 600 text messages alone from people advocating their positions. We've had 63 hours of public hearings, 34 hours alone on gun-related bills. I don't know if we've ever had that many hours of public testimony on any one issue in the 14 years that I've served here.

Most heartening is all of the first-time, I'll call them first-time activists on both sides of the issue. I can't tell you how many people have, have met with me or talked to me or called me and said, I've never called my state senator before. I didn't know who my state senator was. But I'm doing it now. I have to. I feel compelled. This is so important to me.

And to all those, people on both sides, I say two things. One, thank you, thank you for bringing your voice to us as your elected officials. And secondly, keep paying attention. Keep paying attention to everything that we do, because it has an impact on how we represent you.

What we have today is a comprehensive package. Many people have said it, and I'll, I, I don't disagree. It's not perfect. But it is a package that attempts to make our schools safer. It is a package that tries to improve our mental health system, although admittedly there is much more we need to do there. And it is a package that tries to reduce gun violence in our society.

The media has focused a lot on the gun violence part of that issue and not as much on the school safety issue or the mental health. I think it is worth

pointing out though that in many of the public hearings in the School Security Committee that Senator Boucher chaired and the Governor's Task Force, there were various experts who came forward and said, there are things that we can do that can prevent this from happening again. And one of the most critical is the threat assessment teams that we've put into this bill.

So there are measures beyond guns that people and experts have said, if you do them, you can prevent something like this from happening. And I think we've done some of those. Many people today, on both sides but especially those who stand against the bill before us, have talked about the Constitution and the need to protect the rights of the citizens of Connecticut that are guaranteed under our state and federal Constitution. And the Second Amendment is one of those rights.

The United States Constitution guarantees the right to keep and bear arms, a right that existed long before the Constitution. The Constitution didn't create the right. It guarantees that right. As someone who had the good fortune of clerking for our state's highest court and was a law clerk to a Connecticut Supreme Court justice as he sat and made decisions on what our state Constitution meant and rights afforded under that Constitution, I know how important that is and with any laws but particularly gun laws or speech laws or search and seizure-type laws.

My threshold question always is and must be, will this law violate that Constitution? And although I know there are people that disagree, I do not believe this violates either the rights afforded in the State Constitution or the Federal Constitution. I don't do that based on emotion. I do that based on studying and research, reading articles and cases. I've read the Heller case several times and the Miller case and what they mean.

I also know that there is precedence for things like limiting magazine sizes to ten and assault weapon definitions. We've had one in Connecticut since 1993. Other states have had them. New York has limited magazine sizes to ten rounds for years, and our country lived with a magazine ban and an assault

weapon ban for ten years. None of those laws were ever seen as violating constitutions and thrown out.

And I would argue that some didn't challenge many of those laws, because they knew indeed their challenges would have failed. That doesn't mean this bill doesn't have burdens on people to exercise their rights, because there are some. I clearly admit that.

I've done a lot of town hall meetings. I know we all tend to do them. And one of the things that, a, a theme that's come through many of the meetings is that people are very fearful of what they believe is in the bill or what they believe passing this bill will lead to in the future more so than what this bill actually does.

Last night, I spent several hours talking to people about what was in the bill. And I think many were surprised. Many thought the bill required them to annually register all of their guns. It does not. Many thought they were going to be required to purchase liability insurance. They are not. Others thought the bill confiscated their guns or magazines. It does not. Some thought there was going to be a tax on ammunitions that they couldn't afford. The bill does not do that.

We have heard from our colleagues today, we've heard from advocates, we've, we will probably hear from people in the House that this bill doesn't go as far as some would like. And those individuals get to exercise their rights as elected officials or as citizens to advocate for further laws if they see fit.

But those bills in the future that may come are not before me today. And I am voting today on what is before us, and I believe it is a good package. I, I will close with the reason I stand here. I, I am blessed, I have been blessed for over 14 years to be the State Senator for Newtown, Connecticut.

And I've told you all -- and I apologize for repeating myself -- I wake up in the morning, I got the green ribbon and the guardian angel from a police officer, and I try to put it on my jacket every day to remember those that we've lost, because I stand here, I stand

here as their voice, as their elected representative and the 20 children we've lost.

And so today, in making this vote, I want to be the voice for Charlotte Bacon and Daniel Barden and Olivia Engel and Josephine Gay and Ana Marquez-Green and Dylan Hockley and Madeleine Hsu and Catherine Hubbard and Chase Kowalski and Jessie Lewis and James Mattioli and Grace McDonnell and Emilie Parker and Jack Pinto and Noah Pozner and Caroline Previdi and Jessica Rekos and Avielle Richman and Benjamin Wheeler and Allison Wyatt and their siblings and their moms and their dads.

And I get to be the voice of six incredible professionals, teachers, administrators, principals, Rachel Davino and Anne Marie Murphy and Lauren Rousseau and Victoria Soto and Mary Sherlach and Dawn Hochsprung.

I, I received a text early this morning from a friend of mine I've known for over 35 years. We met in eighth grade. His wife works at Sandy Hook Elementary School, and, and one of the guilts I carry with me is that it took me several hours at the firehouse before I realized I forgot to ask if she survived. I've known him for 35 years. I've known his wife for 25 years. And I frantically asked Colonel Stebbins if she was alive. So I wanted to read his text and let him have the last word for me as their voice today.

His text read, John, good luck and good job on all your efforts following Sandy Hook. You are making the world a better and safer place. And I pray that he's right.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you, Senator.

Ladies and gentlemen, ladies and gentlemen, I ask you not to do that. I apologize. We asked both sides not to do this.

Senator Williams.

SENATOR WILLIAMS:

Thank you, Madam President.

I want to begin by thanking Senator McKinney for his leadership on behalf of his constituents and his caring in their incredible hour of need and his leadership here in this circle and in this process. Senator McKinney, we don't agree all the time, but you are a treasured and valued friend and colleague in this circle, and I appreciate your leadership on this issue. This has been a journey for all of us.

The last 110 days after the tragedy in Newtown has brought a new commitment in the State of Connecticut. What we have seen is Legislators, Democrats and Republicans, not turning away but looking to take action to bring meaning to this senseless tragedy. This will go beyond today.

Folks have talked about mental health issues, and I want to point out the task force that was put together by Governor Malloy is continuing to meet. Their recommendations on mental health issues are not due until December of this year. I want to thank the Governor for his work. I want to thank Governor Malloy for his priorities, so many of which are incorporated in this bill.

And, Madam President, Lieutenant Governor Wyman, I want to thank you. I know that you and the Governor have been to Newtown so many times and attended the funerals of those young children. Thank you for representing us and our state. For those who believe we should be doing more in terms of mental health services, I don't think anyone in this, in this circle will disagree.

But if you're saying we cannot or should not move forward on gun violence prevention measures because it's all about mental health, I would strongly disagree. Senator Harp mentioned the example of the mentally deranged individual who went into an elementary school armed with a knife, and he injured many children. None died.

It's access to the weapons of war, the access to the weapons that can kill mass amounts of children or

adults in our schools and in our communities. That is the essential issue when it comes to mass killings and all of the mass killings that we have seen in the last ten to 20 years but primarily the last ten years.

So, yes, we must address mental health issues, but we cannot ignore the access to those weapons. And we must do all we can to prevent those who would harm our children from having those weapons. There are those who would say, you know, I don't think this bill is going to do anything, all that permitting, all of the background checks. You know, they can't even agree on background checks in Washington, D.C. But that's what it takes to keep the guns out of the hands of criminals. Isn't that what we all want?

There was just some information that came out very recently from the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, and they have studied this issue carefully. They've said, common sense policies adopted at the state and local level succeed in reducing the diversion of guns to criminals.

And what specifically? Strong regulation and oversight of licensed gun dealers, regulation of gun sales by private sellers, and permit to purchase licensing systems, exactly what we have in this bill. And what's the result of that? Significantly fewer guns are diverted into criminal hands. This is exactly what we should be doing to help protect our children and our communities.

Now there are some who would say, well, there's enough rules on the books. But if you have a loophole in your rules that allows folks to purchase firearms, perhaps as many as 40 percent of all the firearm sales, without background checks, those checks that can keep the guns out of criminal hands, do we have enough rules on the books, or does it not make sense to close that loophole? That's what this bill does.

There are some who would say, well, this bill will simply provide a false sense of security. And you know what? You can't promise that this will prevent all of the mass shootings and Adam Lanza murders in the future. Well, you know what? No one is

guaranteeing that. No one is claiming that this bill will solve all of the problems.

But as Senator Coleman said earlier, to say that since it doesn't solve all the problems we should do nothing is wrong. And when it comes to the issue of that sense of security, and that might lead to a question, is there anything in this bill that could have prevented that tragedy at Sandy Hook, I mean, the short answer is we'll never know.

But if this bill had been in effect when Adam Lanza was a small boy going off to school for the first time, I think we have to ask ourselves, what would have happened if his primary caregivers, if his pediatrician, as a young boy, had had access to specialists, behavior consultants, not just folks who were looking at learning disabilities but behavioral issues?

What if, as he got older in school, there was a heightened sense of awareness among everyone in the school about the behavioral issues, the mental health issues? What if there could have been greater outreach to him and others like him to remove him from his isolation and connect him to peers and adults? If you don't think these issues are going on right now in our schools in Connecticut and across the country, you're wrong. We ought to be making these efforts, taking these steps now.

This bill does that. And what if, at the time that his mother purchased firearms, she could not have purchased an assault rifle, not a military assault rifle designed to shoot dozens if not hundreds of people in a matter of minutes and could not have bought high-capacity magazines to go along with it?

I don't know what the outcome would have been. I don't know. But I can tell you this. It's worth our effort to pass this bill. This has been a tremendous effort of Democrats and Republicans putting aside partisanship, transcending politics. This is a new and historic model for the country on an issue that has typically been the most controversial and divisive.

We, in Connecticut, are breaking new ground today. So I am proud of this process. I am proud of my colleagues, Democrats and Republicans in the Senate, in the House. We have done things differently, and we should have done things differently given the magnitude of the tragedy that we face.

Madam President, I urge passage of this bill.

THE CHAIR:

Thank you.

Will you remark? Will you remark?

If not, Mr. Clerk, will you call, call for a roll call vote, and the machine is open.

THE CLERK:

Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate. Senators, please return to the Chamber. Immediate roll call has been ordered in the Senate.

THE CHAIR:

If all members have voted, all members have voted? The machine will be locked.

Mr. Clerk, will you please call a tally.

THE CLERK:

Emergency Certified Bill Number 1160.

Total Number Voting	36
Necessary for Adoption	19
Those voting Yea	26
Those voting Nay	10
Those absent and not voting	0

THE CHAIR:

The bill passes.

Senator Looney.

Please, ladies and gentlemen.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Thank you. Thank you, Madam President. Madam President, I move for immediate transmittal to the House of Representatives of Emergency Certified Bill 1160 for which the House awaits.

THE CHAIR:

Seeing no objection, so ordered, sir.

Senator Looney.

SENATOR LOONEY:

Madam President, I believe there may be some points of personal privilege at this time.

THE CHAIR:

Is there any points of personal privilege?

Senator Meyer.

SENATOR MEYER:

Thank you, Madam President.

We have a remarkable guest here in the Chamber. Her name is Theresa McSparran. She's a Special Olympic athlete. And Senator Linares and I would like to introduce her to you. I'm just looking for her in this large crowd.

THE CHAIR:

You know what? Why don't we just stand at ease a moment then --

SENATOR MEYER:

Okay.