

Robert Chambers

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Opposition to the various restrictive firearms bills being considered.

Honorable committee members,

Thank you for giving me an opportunity to voice my opinion on the matters being considered today.

I hope that the legislators here in Hartford will move more cautiously and conservatively than did their counterparts in Albany who, in their rush to do something, anything, have created a mass of legal problems for residents in that state as well as their law enforcement community who are covered by the same ill conceived laws rushed into force in the middle of the night. I expect that the citizens of New York will bring federal circuit court proceedings questioning the constitutionality of the laws and I will applaud their efforts.

I'm sure you will hear many arguments regarding why banning standard capacity magazines is wrong, why banning firearms on the basis of cosmetic features is pointless and hopefully other well thought out reasonable arguments from people much wiser than I.

I'm not here to talk about that, I'm here to tell you a story, a story with a warning.

I was born in England. When I was 11 years old my grandfather let me shoot his 410 shotgun on some woodland near his house. This was my first exposure to a firearm. In those days you were required to obtain a gun license from your local police constabulary, you were required to keep the arms and ammunition locked up and the police could come by and inspect your storage magazine and firearms.

My father's work sent us to live in Texas, and then Maine and when I had graduated from college I eventually settled down to live and raise a family in Connecticut.

I re-kindled my interest in shooting and eventually went through the background check and interview and obtained my CT permit to carry pistols and revolvers. I purchased a couple of handguns and now shoot in a Wednesday night pistol league at the Bridgeport Rifle Club. My children have both been members of the junior rifle league at the same club which has sent many marksmen off to win medals in national and international competitions.

My story though is about the land of my birth and what has happened to it.

All handguns and rifles were required to be registered in 1920. In 1953 the carrying of handguns (i.e. for personal protection was prohibited) and later in 1967 mandatory registration of shotguns was ordered.

England and Scotland also had some multiple murders both were committed by people remarked to have been "odd" or "sleazy" when they were investigated. Clearly people already knew these people had something wrong with them yet nobody did anything. After the shooting while the nation was raw the politicians started on their quest for total gun control.

In 1987 the Hungerford shooting (17 dead) occurred and more calls for gun control went out.

In the intervening years the media had portrayed gun owners as mentally unstable or criminals in waiting.

In 1996 the Dunblane Scotland murders happened (17 dead, 16 of them children) which pretty much sealed the fate of the remaining lawful gun owners in the UK.

When the inquiry for this incident was done, subjects in the UK had three months to turn in all their handguns and those that didn't were visited and threatened by the police.

Now the common man in England is defenseless. Police calls often take hours to arrive as the police departments are so busy. Any attempt to defend yourself often finds the victim of the attack being charged with attempted bodily harm and the attackers given a slap on the wrist.

Gun crime did not disappear in the UK after this as the criminals didn't turn in their guns at all.

They were now emboldened as their victims were physically disarmed. Gun crimes actually rose

through the 1990's until they peaked in 2003/2004 and then saw a decrease (as gun crime in the US also saw a decrease without a decrease in the number of guns)

One need only look back to the riots in 2011 after a police officer shot a 29 year old black man in London. The tension was high before this incident and it sparked off a week of rioting in which many cars, houses and businesses were looted and burned. All told approximately 200 million pounds worth of damage was done. Images on the news showed business owners unable to protect their life's work only to see it destroyed by looters and arsonists. The police were also impotent to stop the mayhem.

Knife crime in the UK has become prevalent to the point where kitchen knives are being manufactured with rounded tips and carrying a knife outside of the home is illegal.

Recently the EU named Great Britain as the most violent country in the European Union.

The chart below from the Daily Mail shows that in the last year that numbers were available the UK had 1,158,957 violent crimes. With the UK population works out to be 2,034 violent crimes per 100,000 residents. Compare this to the United States where the violent crime per 100,000 residents is only 466. (1)

The criminal's knowledge that the population is disarmed and unable to defend themselves surely must factor into this statistic.

I have watched with saddened interest the parallel path that the United States seems intent on taking with that of the United Kingdom.

Please, don't let Connecticut and in turn the United States become like the United Kingdom.

Thank you for your attention and for hearing my thoughts.

Robert Chambers

Source: (1) The Daily Mail (UK) July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2009

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1196941/The-violent-country-Europe-Britain-worse-South-Africa-U-S.html>

# THE LEAGUE OF SHAME

Country	Number of violent crimes	Rate per 100,000 residents
<b>1. UK</b>	<b>1,158,957</b>	<b>2,034</b>
2. Austria	133,546	1,677
3. South Africa	732,121	1,609
4. Sweden	108,004	1,123
5. Belgium	107,885	1,006
6. Canada	306,559	935
7. Finland	41,664	738
8. Netherlands	111,888	676
9. Luxembourg	3,233	565
10. France	324,765	504

## HOW THE UK COMPARES IN OTHER CRIMES

Rate per 100,000 residents and EU ranking



Source: Conservatives, EU Commission, UN