

Dear Members of the Task Force,

Thank you for doing this critical work for Newtown, our state and for our country. You have a unique opportunity to show our state, our nation and the world that you act by following your heart! I urge you to craft a legislation as a mother, father, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather, aunt or uncle. You have an opportunity to lead the country by honoring the 26 lives lost on that horrific day by passing the most sensible gun, school safety and mental health laws in this country. You must do more to protect our children, our teachers and other good citizens of this state. We don't want to live in fear!

I am a mother of four. I live in Sandy Hook.

My husband and I moved to Sandy Hook 13 years ago to raise our children in a very safe community with a great school system. We bought a home in a beautiful child-friendly neighborhood. Just about every home has a swing set, children ride their bikes, people run and our neighbors are always walking their dogs. All of our four children attended Sandy Hook Elementary School from 1999 to 2010. It was a sad day when my son, our youngest, graduated from Sandy Hook Elementary School a year and a half ago because we loved the people in that school.

I felt scared, shocked and anguished on December 14, 2012 when we heard the terrible news. It was one of the saddest days of my life. I hope it was one of your saddest days as well. We lost our neighbors. We lost our friends of friends. We lost our principal and we lost our teachers. Twelve children from the two classrooms witnessed something they should have never witnessed. First responders and teachers are still in shock.

I was shocked to hear the shooter lived 200 yards from my home! He lived across the street from one of the victims in my neighborhood.

Too many times, I have been horrified by other mass shootings (Columbine, Virginia Tech, Tucson, Seal Beach, Aurora) but I did not take any action. But on that dreadful day, I made a promise to do all I can to attempt to prevent this type of senseless violence in the future. This is why I am here imploring you to do more to make us feel safe. We have the right to feel safe!

I grew up in Vermont with family members who hunt. I have friends who hunt and I am not against the 2nd Amendment but I am against the type of guns and ammunition that were used by the shooter to massacre 20 precious, innocent children and six of our most dedicated teachers.

Surely, you can do more to make our towns, state and country safer by passing sensible laws that could prevent this type of tragedy in the future. Why do our laws allow Nancy Lanza to own multiple military style assault weapons with high capacity magazines in her home ----200 yards from my suburban home---- when her son had mental health issues? Why?

If this horrific event can happen to our neighbors in our neighborhood elementary school in Sandy Hook then it can happen anywhere! Please honor the 26 lives and follow your heart and not the NRA, the NSSF or any other gun lobbying groups. Lives are worth more than money for campaigns and an elected position. If you are wavering, then please come to Newtown and meet each and every family member who lost their loved ones and also ask anyone in Newtown if things feel the same. Things will never be the same for us. Please do not let Sandy Hook be remembered for the tragedy. Now is the time to pass substantial laws such as the one being recommended by Connecticut against Gun Violence.

The nation will thank you for being a true leader and all of us will be able to go to malls, work, city halls, places of worship, salons, and especially our schools without fear!

If not now, when?

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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