



DANNEL P. MALLOY
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

January 11, 2013

The Honorable Joseph Biden
Vice President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Vice President:

I write in response to your letter of January 4, 2013, requesting Governors' thoughts and ideas related to federal gun control.

But first, I want to thank you and President Obama again for the support you have shown the families of the Sandy Hook Elementary victims, the community of Newtown, the state of Connecticut, and indeed the entire nation in the wake of the December 14th shootings. Your leadership has been profound.

And I thank you and the President for your initiative to address at a national level the acute problem of gun violence. Not since you and President Clinton led the effort to enact the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 has there been a serious discussion at the federal level about gun control. So I commend you and the President for your leadership.

Last week, I announced the formation of The Sandy Hook Advisory Commission, comprised of experts in mental health, education, law enforcement, and first response. We may never know what motivated the shootings at Sandy Hook Elementary. But that won't stop my state from working to prevent future tragedy. Over the coming months, the commission will come together to make specific, actionable recommendations to me in the areas of school safety, mental health services, and gun violence prevention. I would be pleased to share those recommendations with you. But while I will have more to say on this topic in the near future, I recognize that the President has asked for your recommendations by next week. So, I'm pleased to offer you my initial thoughts.

Connecticut has some of the strongest gun control laws in the country. Our neighbors, including New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts, likewise have strong gun control laws on the books. But our laws are not enough; gun control must be addressed nationally. As long as weapons continue to travel up and down I-95, what is legally available for sale in Florida or Virginia can have devastating consequences here in Connecticut.

I believe the federal government can begin to address this problem of gun violence with several common-sense changes. In the days following the Sandy Hook shootings, I've spoken publicly about the need to reinstate and strengthen the federal assault weapons ban and the ban on high capacity magazine clips. Any definition of "assault weapon" should eliminate the possibility of manufacturers bypassing the ban with minor modifications. You don't need an assault weapon or a 30-round clip to go

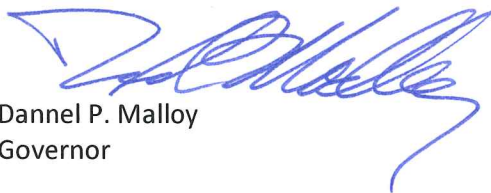
hunting, and you don't need an assault weapon or a 30-round clip to honor the Constitution of the United States.

The Congress should require a background check for all firearm purchases, federal firearm licenses, gun show or other private transactions or transfers. In Connecticut, any handgun purchaser must obtain a permit, revocable under certain circumstances, that requires a background check and completion of a firearm safety course given by accredited trainers. And as you emphasized when you spoke by teleconference with Governors on January 9th, we need to do a better job collecting the appropriate data to inform those background checks without unnecessarily compromising anyone's privacy.

These ideas are both obvious and practical. Of course, there are more which should be considered, many of which were highlighted in the aforementioned call with Governors. And while we must balance our respect for individual rights with our obligation to provide for the greater public safety, I would note one idea that has been proposed by gun advocates which I oppose: when it comes to preventing future acts of gun violence in our schools, more guns are not the answer. Freedom is not a handgun on the hip of every teacher, and security should not mean an armed guard posted outside every classroom.

Again, thank you for your leadership. I stand ready to support you and the President.

Sincerely,



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor