

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Josh Fiorini, and I am CEO and co-owner of PTR Industries, Inc. – a manufacturer of rifles and small arms in Bristol, CT. PTR manufactures rifles for civilian consumption, but we also supply the U.S. military, many U.S. police departments, and allied foreign militaries as well.

We are all saddened by the tragedy that took place in Newtown this past December. To date, the State of CT has proceeded in earnest and with prudence in conducting a debate on how best to address safety in our schools. As a local manufacturer who could bear enormous consequences to any legislative response and changes in firearms laws, I wanted to submit this testimony today to implore the task force to continue on its thoughtful and prudent path toward a common-sense response to this issue – and not veer in the direction of holding law-abiding gun owners responsible which could have severe consequences not just for the rights of CT citizens, but also for the economy.

As a citizen, I believe that attacking the rights of legal gun-owners in response to the actions of a madman is bad policy. This seems rather akin to banning certain types of food as a result of a bacteria outbreak, or restricting the rights of sober drivers in response to drunk driving deaths. However, I am certain that you will hear numerous arguments on this point from citizens at large and I will therefore confine the rest of my testimony from the perspective of a local employer.

My company employs 37 people here in Bristol, CT – most in skilled labor positions. Our lowest paid employee receives \$14 per hour and our average shop rate is \$17.75. We offer health, dental, disability and life insurance along with 401K matching. These are the kinds of solid, community building manufacturing jobs that everyone in the state claims to want and need. Further, we support three other local businesses almost entirely with services that we vend out, which comprise another 19 full time skilled labor positions. In total, I am writing this letter on behalf of 56 people that are entirely dependent on our business for their livelihoods.

The last thirty years have seen the manufacturing base in CT absolutely decimated with jobs moving overseas and to other parts of the country. Much of this migration has been the result of policies put in place here that were less friendly to business than other locations. Only very recently has there been a small revival in skilled manufacturing jobs locally. While any law that is passed may not expressly prohibit my company from doing business in the state, intensive firearm regulations on the general population are a real threat to our ability to conduct business even if they exempt federally licensed manufacturers.

My employees have to transport our product in commerce – to and from vendors for manufacturing, to and from target ranges for testing, and for deliveries to other federally licensed dealers. In all of these scenarios my employees are at the very real risk of harassment by a less-than perfectly informed police officer who most likely would prefer to arrest first and ask questions later. The more unfriendly the general environment is to firearms, the more unfriendly it becomes to the legitimate business of firearms manufacture in the state. It is very tempting to consider a move to a state with more friendly laws regarding firearms that would allow us to

conduct business more smoothly – I implore the legislature not to add to this temptation by over-regulating firearms.

While my company may be of small consequence to the CT economy as a whole, the firearms manufacturing industry is not. I am joined by my Colt, Mossberg, Ruger, Stag, and a host of other companies locally that employ thousands of people combined and support thousands of other jobs indirectly. I urge the task force, and all legislators to consider these companies, and these jobs in any legislation that may come about affecting the rights of gun owners.

PTR as a company fully supports a common-sense response to reduce violence. We feel that expanding background checks, standardizing pistol permit applications, and even expanding the permit requirement to encompass rifles and shotguns would all be prudent firearm related steps toward actually reducing the likelihood of another tragedy. The key to this issue is how to keep firearms out of the hands of people who would do harm with them. We urge the task force and the legislature to please focus on the relationship between firearms and criminals (or the mentally unstable) rather than on simply the firearms themselves.

A path that improves school security, enhances mental health services and documentation, and makes it more difficult for *at risk* individuals to obtain firearms is the way to address this crisis. As a local business, we are committed to assisting in a common sense response that addresses these issues. But also, as a local business, we would like to keep our jobs – and we hope that our legislators will avoid rushing to unproductive firearms hardware legislation that could put our jobs at risk.

On behalf of PTR Industries, Inc. and with Best Regards,
Josh

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Chief Executive Officer

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