



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

John J. Bonacic

## Statement by Senator John Bonacic: On Gun Control Legislation

JOHN J. BONACIC January 14, 2013

As the *Daily Freeman* quoted Ulster County Sheriff Paul Van Blarcum, in an article on January 13, 2013: "Anybody wants to do anything, they will find a way to do it."

The Sheriff pointed out that more restrictive gun and ammunition laws will not solve the crime problem. Sadly, I believe that is true.

Calls to my offices have been overwhelmingly against more gun control. When my constituents are overwhelmingly against something, and the bill we are asked to vote on is rushed through without any public review, that is nearly always a good reason to vote "no."

New York State, for years, has had the toughest gun laws in the nation. In reading the summary of the legislation provided (my comments below are based on how the legislation has been explained, because the print of the bill has not been shown to Legislators as I write this - 8 PM on January 14), it appears law abiding citizens would become criminals – eligible to be sent to jail, simply by failing to tell the government they own guns they lawfully purchased.

Equally problematic is the provision in the legislation prohibiting more than seven rounds in a ten round magazine – something irrelevant to a criminal. Under the legislation, magazines people now own, which are capable of holding ten rounds (bullets) continue to be legal, but a person may only load seven rounds in them. It strains credibility to believe a criminal bent on a massacre is going to load only seven bullets in a ten round magazine. Law abiding citizens, on the other hand, who erroneously load too many bullets in a magazine, would be criminals under the legislation.

There are parts of this legislation I like and would support if they were enacted separately from the rest of this legislation:

- Penalties should be increased substantially when crimes are committed with guns;
- Penalties should be increased for "straw purchasers" of guns;
- Penalties should be increased for the unlawful possession of any gun;
- Mental Health concerns expressed by professionals should be able to lead to the suspension or revocation of the ability to own a gun;
- The State should allocate aid for more school security to protect our children.

Too often, in a rush to be "first" or "toughest" or in a desire to vote on something that "sounds good" or appeases a particular constituency, substantive policies are carelessly enacted.

I sincerely hope this law does stop another massacre, but I honestly believe it is nothing more than window dressing designed to make people feel secure until the next tragedy strikes – all while criminalizing the actions of otherwise law abiding citizens.

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