

NY mass shooting survivor wants magazine limits

AP Associated Press

By MICHAEL VIRTANEN 04/04/11

ALBANY, N.Y. — The critically wounded receptionist who phoned police during a gunman's rampage two years ago has broken her public silence to ask for a renewed federal ban on large-capacity gun magazines like those Jiverly Wong used to fire 97 bullets in under two minutes, killing 13 and wounding four others.

Shirley DeLucia, who played dead under her desk at the American Civic Association in Binghamton, said the only point of those magazines is to inflict "as much carnage as possible," like in the January shooting in Tucson that killed six people and wounded 13, including U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords.

Wong, with 30-bullet magazines and two handguns, shot most of his victims multiple times. He killed himself as police arrived.

"How many mass shootings will it take for Congress to protect us?" said DeLucia, who was shot in the abdomen. "The horror of that day haunts me through flashbacks, nightmares, and lasting physical effects. I live with it every day and I'll have to live with it for the rest of my life, but if there's one thing I can do to prevent future violence, it's to express my fervent support for this."

Pending legislation would ban magazines holding more than 10 rounds.

Binghamton's Mayor Matthew Ryan, Police Chief Joseph Zikuski and Broome County District Attorney Gerald Mollen gathered Monday to mark the second anniversary of the April 3, 2009, shootings in the city of 42,000 about 10 miles north of the Pennsylvania state line. They also support the legislation.

"We need a federal ban on large capacity ammunition magazines to protect the public and give cops the advantage we need over criminals," Zikuski said.

Richard Aborn, president of the Citizens Crime Commission of New York City, said growing support from law enforcement nationally should make the message clear.

According to doctors and police, mockery of Wong's poorly spoken English, anger over losing a factory job and a severe, undiagnosed mental illness led the embittered Vietnamese immigrant to strap on a bulletproof vest and target people who, like him, had traveled from afar in hopes of bettering their lives.

The murdered at the immigrant services center included 11 students, a teacher and a part-time caseworker.

Both Democratic New York Sens. Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand are among 10 Senate co-sponsors of the legislation to ban high-capacity magazines.

Rep. Maurice Hinchey, the House Democrat who also represents Binghamton, has not backed the effort. "He's reviewing the legislation while seeking other measures, including those that would address America's mental health care crisis to ensure such a horrific event never happens again," spokesman Mike Morosi said.

State legislation was introduced last month that would ban large-capacity magazines in New York, sponsored by Sen. Eric Adams, a former New York City police captain who said he recently bought such a clip at a gun store in suburban Albany.

The National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action called a similar bill recently introduced in Connecticut that would make a felony of failing to turn in a magazine "a bill in search of a problem. ... No correlation exists between the size or arbitrary capacity of a detachable magazine and violent crime."

The NRA said owners of large-capacity magazines have reasons including sport, competition and self-defense and urged contacting lawmakers to urge them to oppose that bill and "and any action that forces law-abiding citizens to surrender their property based on the actions of criminals who will not abide by this proposed law."