

Sandy Hook lawsuit sent back to state court

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BRIDGEPORT - A federal court judge has agreed to send the lawsuit by 10 Newtown families, who brought suit against the manufacturer, distributor, and seller of the Bushmaster assault rifle used in the shooting at **Sandy Hook Elementary School** in 2012, back to state court where it was initially filed.

Shortly after the families filed suit last year, Bushmaster removed the case to federal court. Bushmaster argued that a federal law granting broad immunity to the gun industry provided a basis to dismiss the plaintiffs' case against Riverview Sales, the store that sold the Bushmaster assault rifle. Bushmaster urged the court to find that the plaintiffs' claims against Riverview were meritless and that Riverview had thus been "fraudulently" named as a defendant in the case.

Yesterday's ruling by the district court was an unequivocal rejection of that argument, said **Josh Koskoff** of Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder. The case will now be set down for trial in **Superior Court** here.

"All my clients seek is an opportunity to present their case to a Connecticut jury," Koskoff said. "This ruling brings them one step closer to that goal. It is a major setback for the gun industry in their attempt to avoid responsibility for tragedies like Newtown." The families' complaint argues that Bushmaster and the other defendants should be held accountable for their decision to entrust a highly lethal assault weapon to the general public without any of the safeguards that are present in the military or law enforcement.

"The AR-15 assault rifle was designed as a military weapon," said **Katie Mesner-Hage**, also of Koskoff, Koskoff & Bieder. "The defendants chose to make that weapon available

to Connecticut citizens and to market it in explicitly militaristic terms - even in the wake of Columbine, Aurora, and countless other tragedies. A Connecticut jury should have the opportunity to evaluate that choice and decide whether defendants bear some responsibility for what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School.”