

The term, 'The Connecticut Effect' has actually been converted from a passing trend, as it had been referred to by an NRA lobbyist, to 90% of our citizens realizing that the time for sitting back has passed. If Columbine, Paducah, Aurora, Virginia Tech and Newtown weren't enough to wake us up from our sense of complacency, what will it take? We seem to have forgotten that we just can't always have what we want, and not having it isn't an indication that we have been failed, ignored, or plotted against.

I can very clearly recall the days of care-free car rides while riding in the back seat of our family's red Rambler. Those were the days prior to the arrival of the Crash-Test Dummies...back when life was simple. Of course, we didn't know what seat belts were: they looked uncomfortable, and why in heaven's name would we want something that would cause any inconvenience in our lives? When the day came and we got the word that laws were passed that required our wearing them, my parents did what good parents did. They buckled us in. Their decision was not simply based upon law. Instead, it was strongly influenced by the research that had been done on the problem of auto injuries and deaths. They heard experts give testimony as to the need for this new form of protection, understood the ramifications of not using these new-fangled things, and life continued. Since then, we've worn seat belts, followed the laws regarding infant and child car seats, and still stop for red flashing lights on school buses. It's the law, after all, and those laws exist to keep the greater community safe. It might cause inconvenience at times, but they were put in place to prevent health hazards.

Today, we are faced with a new health hazard in our communities. In some parts of our country, it has infiltrated areas that were previously considered to be safe. Today, new laws need to be passed that will honor the 2nd Amendment as it was meant to be read. That is from start to finish, rather than picking and choosing which parts suit our liking. The reformed laws that the citizens of the United States need are those that will provide the means of protecting us all. This will require Legislators who possess intelligence, wisdom, strength, honesty, and perhaps most importantly, a backbone. So, the question remains, will those Legislators step forward?

We also need citizens who are willing to "come to the table" with ears, minds and hearts open while they have the common courtesy to close their mouths when others are speaking. During the 22+ years that I've spent as an educator, I've gained the ability to be able to observe a student's behavior and decide whether or not they are actually hearing me during a lecture, or are closing off their active hearing while formulating an argument. How unfortunate that such

behavior has been so clearly observed at so many hearings and Town Hall Meetings during which gun reform is being discussed.

As a former principal, my concept of what happened on 14 December is comparable to a Perfect Storm. Someone who was mentally ill had access to heavy-duty firearms, was able to force his way into the school, and managed to massacre innocent children and some of their school's staff. We can choose to examine those issues one at a time, or we can do it simultaneously. I opt for choice #2 simply because I don't believe that you can separate one factor from the rest. Regardless of which side of the fence you find yourself, it is undeniable that the Sandy Hook shooter took lives with the help of guns...very specific guns. If you can at least agree that the Sandy Hook massacre was achieved with a firearm, isn't it logical that some sort of action must be taken to control that weapon and how it might fall into a potential shooter's hands, or any like it, that is likely to cause the same carnage?

Gun reform is the logical and honorable thing to do. It is not based on emotions. It is based on facts. If you doubt my word, contact the American Academy of Pediatrics, and other health care professional associations. We are facing a health crisis, and we are faced with having the ability to offset it.

We're talking reform, as opposed to control. Support saner and safer gun reform for the sake of our children and communities. They are worth the effort.

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