

I am a believer in upholding the constitution and have voted for officials that I believe will do the same. I also support the creation and enforcement of laws to protect the public by deterring and reducing violence. Another core belief is that those that commit crimes must be held accountable for their actions.

I call on our elected officials to create real deterrents that will help reduce the likelihood of recurrence of such a horrifying act. Unfortunately, too many of the proposals made to date do not appear to be effective. Other options need to be considered and the facts need to be made public.

Facts: Where are they?

- Seeking information to measure crimes committed with guns is quite difficult for the general public. There are statistics for violent crimes, rape, aggravated assault, murder, burglary, motor vehicle theft, but no readily published data for the category of gun violence or types of weapons used or if those guns used in the commission of a crime were legally owned. Another data point is to measure recidivism. The Department of Correction should report outcomes related to the early release programs and include information regarding firearm involvement.

Proposals:

Ammunition tax

- Increasing the cost of guns or ammunition through tax policy will not act as a deterrent. Merely, it would more likely serve to increase the amount of importation and illegal distribution for those who choose to or are unable to pay the additional costs. Such action would result in no change in violence.

Assault Weapon Ban

- Having a military-like characteristic, such as a flash suppressor, a collapsible stock, a removable magazine or a bayonet mount, does not make any weapon more or less lethal. It may sound like positive action and results to the ill-informed, but such actions are disingenuous and nonsensical. The public would be far better served by the gathering and publication of facts rather than spending effort and time that will produce no deterrent of or reduction in violence.

Magazine capacity - 100, 30, 20, 10, 5 round magazines.

- Would a limitation to 10 bullets prevent/reduce murders in our State? This is where research data would enable an informed decision to be made. What is the real amount of murders categorized by type of weapon. (Rifle, handgun, knife, bayonet or with magazines of 10, 30 or more rounds) Is the public better served by looking at those that make up the few or by looking at making a real difference by acting upon the majority cause of violence? Data needs to be made public. It needs to be advertised. Then act and make a real difference.

Please seek to increase enforcement of existing laws and punish those that commit violent acts.

Potential deterrent:

- Do not allow reductions in time served for those individuals that were convicted of a violent crime or a crime that involved a firearm.
- Reinstate the death penalty as a penalty option for those individuals that were convicted of a violent crime that involved a firearm.

- Fund the hiring of more state troopers, local police and the expansion of prisons if needed.

Criminals will not obey new laws. Only law abiding citizens will be affected by your action.

Clayton Bannock