

Due to the recent events at Sandy Hook elementary school we now face renewed threats to our Constitutional rights. While I understand how painful the loss must be for those touched by this tragedy, blaming firearms or their owners and punishing them is not the answer to the challenges we face as a nation.

We already have laws that were violated by a man who was likely psychotic and heavily medicated. This man was stopped by the mandatory background check from purchasing firearms. He then decided to murder his mother and take her legally owned firearms to commit this tragedy.

Let's not allow the lives lost in Newtown to become an opportunity for an irresponsible political agenda that violates the rights of responsible citizens. Do we demand legislation banning vehicles or alcohol to end drunken driving deaths? Or the banning of spoons and forks to end obesity? The fact is people are to blame for their actions.

Gun-control advocates tell us that removing guns from society makes us safer. But that is simply an impossibility. Those who wish to have guns, and disregard the law, will have guns. Ironically, gun control clears a path for violence and makes aggression more likely, whether the aggressor is a terrorist or a government. I don't really believe "gun-free" zones make any difference. If they did, why would the worst shootings consistently happen in gun-free zones such as schools? And while accidents do happen (just as in driving, skiing, boating, or most dynamic hobbies) aggressive, terroristic shootings like this are unheard of at gun and knife shows, the antithesis of a gun-free zone.

Why does anybody need an assault weapon? This misinformed question has flooded our society in recent weeks. A more informed question is: Does anyone own an assault weapon? The fact-based answer is that almost no one owns an assault weapon. Since the Machine Gun Act of 1934, private ownership of assault weapons has been almost completely eliminated because an assault weapon is a portable machine gun. A machine gun, as you probably know, fires as long as your finger is on the trigger, as does an assault weapon.

However, the guns that the media refer to today as assault weapons (e.g. AR-15s) cannot fire for as long as your finger is on the trigger. The so-called assault weapons the media refer to fire the same way a semi-automatic handgun or fixed stock hunting rifles do, one shot at a time, one trigger squeeze at a time. A semi-automatic rifle is not an assault weapon just as a needle and thread is not a sewing machine. Weapons such as the AR-15 are used for hunting, completion shooting, and general recreation. People enjoy this particular model because of its ergonomics, ability to be tailored fit to the operator, and performance (i.e. accuracy and reliability). This is no different then a hobby race car driver wanting to drive a Porsche instead of a Honda.

How often has the media told us that 99.4% of all guns are not used in crimes? Why hasn't the media told us that since 1934 there have been approximately 20,000 gun control laws passed and crime has gone up?

Why did the media turn its back on the Lott study which proved conclusively that rape, murder, and assault occur more frequently in areas where the citizens are denied the right of self-defense than in areas where citizens are allowed to carry concealed weapons? Why hasn't the media compared the Los Angeles riots, in which 58 people were killed, and the aftermath of Hurricane Andrew, which caused far more damage, but no one was killed by rioters or looters? Could it be that in Los Angeles it is almost impossible to get a concealed carry permit and the city's culture is anti-gun, whereas in Florida people are allowed to carry concealed weapons and citizens were able to protect their property and their lives

by being armed? Why doesn't the media tell us about the store owners and citizens who saved their lives, their families' lives and their property during the LA riots by using so-called assault weapons? Could it be a black out? Could it be the same kind of reporting that equates a needle and thread with a sewing machine?

Banning types of firm arms and or limiting magazine capacity will not stop someone set on committing a heinous crime. The criminal can carry three 10 round magazines, instead of one 30 round magazine, or use countless other devices (e.g. bombs, vehicles, chemicals, etc.) to carry out their horrific intentions. Evil people will find ways to do evil things.

If tragedies such as Sandy Hook or the Connecticut Cheshire Home Invasion have taught us anything, it's that the police and other protective services can not possibility protect all (at least to the majority) of us from people set on committing these type of crimes. It's not from lack of trying, but the reality is that police can not be everywhere instantaneously. The Cheshire Home Invasion may have had a different out come if the members of that family were properly trained in the use of firearms.

As a whole, the firearm community comprises some of our most productive and law-abiding citizens. These people enjoy the sport of shooting, whether that be hunting, skeet, trap, precision rifling, steel target, or other shooting sports and should not have to be penalized for the actions of a few sick individuals. Why should our way of life and personal security be threatened?

If your true goal is to protect our children, then enact legislation that will do that. Banning firearms that are rarely used in crime (less than 1% of the time) is not going to stop such tragedies. This was proven in 1999 when the Columbine shooting took place under the 1994 ban. Do something meaningful. Make committing the insane easier. Put armed security guards in our schools (the taxes from firearm sales alone could pay for that). But do not strip us of our rights and property by passing additional anti-gun laws that have historically had no positive effect on crime in our nation or others.

Thank you for your service.

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