

Thank you for continuing the discussion with this Gun Violence Prevention Working Group.

My name is Hank McConnell. I am an engineer, business owner, Father of two children and through the Boy Scouts of America involved with youth development. I have friends in the Newton area can't comprehend what that community has gone through. The events of December 14th shook the entire planet for nothing hits the heart more than the tragic death of a child.

The Boy Scout Oath promises to honorably do our duty to God and Country. Scouts are taught life, survival skills and yes many are taught gun usage and safety. My personal thought is that it is better to teach a youth proper operation and safety of a fire arm then to have them presented with a situation and not know what to do. Guns have been a part of the American society since its existence. We need to make sure our youth are educated.

As a Scout leader, I have had the opportunity to be associated with many fine young men. But also as a leader, I have seen the challenges faced by parents, schools and the community to deal with mental illness. In my snap shot on life, I have found that the number of children taking mood altering medications is staggering. I have witnessed the uncontrollable rage associated with mental issues. It's a problem we face today with no easy fix. The best we can do is to medicat, educate our society, control the individuals as best we can. This includes taking steps to keep them from harm or harming others.

The second amendment of our constitution states

"A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed"

These few words give me the right as a citizen to own fire arms and because of it, we live in a society where there are gun. What we need to work on as a society is what we can do to limit access and limit effectiveness of those guns when in the hands of someone using them for bad things.

The lunatic fringe is always going to find a weapon of evil. The choice in the last few has been guns. Before that planes. We shouldn't discount any options to stop such things from happening. All avenues should be explored from religious, social, mental health, legislative or legal. Social issues such as this open up major debates and require the consensus of our diverse population. Our diversity makes us strong but means consensus moves slowly. I'm an engineer and I try to fix things when they are broken. So I asked myself what can we do quickly to make something like this never happen again or reduce the effectiveness of a deranged individual? One answer is to collect all the guns. As an engineer, I know solutions also need to be practical. I don't kid myself

thinking that there is a Rosetta stone and realize that all avenues need to be considered but ask also that we step out side the social paradigm box and look at a technological and economic approaches in addition to the others.

My Son came home from school the week after the event and said that the teachers were locking the doors to the class room. It flashed through my brain. "Oh my god, the doors weren't closed or locked". They can lock all of the doors in Hotels from the front desk; his suggestion was we could easily do that in public buildings. He took this idea one step further by adding the idea that those that are suppose to be in a room could open it with their school ID. A perfect answer no, but maybe an automatic door system would have slowed the shooter down, protected some kids and saved a life. This is the kind of outside the box thinking we need.

What if the sprinklers had turned on? Power was cut? What other tools short of an armed guard or more fire power could an administrator have had at their disposal?

Guns exist in our society but ammo is a consumable. You can't print anything if you don't have paper. What if we could create "Smart Bullets" that can't fire without a network authorization or GPS signal? Somebody could go hunting or shoot at a range but couldn't shoot inside.

Ammo and guns that require confirmation that the right person is doing the shooting in an approved location.

Things like this sound far fetched now but 10 years ago, my smart phone would have too.

I am not a big fan of government involvement in individual lives. But when government has gotten it right, the world is a better place. Examples like auto safety, disease prevention, highway systems are great examples as to how government involvement can benefit us all. The gun culture we live in is crying out for this sort of involvement. Just like safety regulations have been mandated to the Auto industry, similar safety regulations could be mandated to the gun industry. Again, no Rosetta stone, people still die in cars, but they are much safer then they were a decade ago. We need to push the gun industry in that direction.

The words of the second amendment does not free me as an owner, or the manufacture of guns from the liability and expense resulting from their usage. My Freedoms and choices as a citizen should not impose costs on other individual. My products as a manufacturer should not impose cost on those who don't use them. If ammo or guns can't be sold unless they meet certain requirements, you will see safer guns and ammo. If gun manufactures are held financially and legally responsible for illegal gun use, you will see more self regulation and self restriction as to who has guns.

Money talks.

I tell my Scouts, the best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time

Thanks for listening

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