

I would like to express my thoughts on the gun laws debate.

This is a familiar debate for me. I have a friend named Greta. Greta does not like guns, any guns. She believes no one should own a gun. She has never shot a gun and does not know anything about them, or the shooting sports. She sees the gun debate from an emotional point of view.

Talking about guns with Greta can be very frustrating because her bias has closed her thought process to other views, regardless of any factual accuracy.

I'm a husband, father and grandfather and I was horrified by the shooting at Sandy Hook. I cannot imagine the pain those families are experiencing, but I can look beyond my emotions to examine the facts.

The Sandy Hook tragedy was caused by an evil, unstable individual. It was not caused by a gun with a high capacity magazine. Adam Lanza was in a "gun free safe zone" for more than 20 minutes. He could have entered that school and killed those defenseless people with a sword or bat in that time frame.

I'm constantly amazed that Greta believes the political and media distortion but refuses to consider the real facts on gun ownership. For example:

1. The AR-15 is not an assault rifle. It is a semiautomatic rifle and no country I know of issues semiautomatic rifles to its' military.
2. According to FBI data for 2011, homicides by all types of rifles were responsible for less than 0.04% (323 of 8,583).
3. There are more than 25 million gun owners in the U.S. **Every day**, more than 25 million legal, responsible gun owners **do not** harm anyone.
4. Every year hundreds of thousands of citizens defend themselves and their loved ones from becoming victims, because of the presence of a legally owned firearm, often without firing the weapon.

So, should new legislation be based on the actions of a few criminal actions without considering the larger good behavior? We don't apply this type of biased thought to other death statistics. Consider this: there were 323 rifle deaths in 2011. More than 1000 people each year are killed by drunk drivers. Do we consider removing cars from the road, or making alcohol illegal? More than 3000 people drown each year. Do we consider mandatory swimming evaluations before allowing people on beaches, into pools, or on boats?

In closing, I ask that you put aside your emotions in deciding any legislation which will only affect the many thousands of responsible, law-abiding gun owners in this state. It will not affect the criminals in our towns. Will additional gun legislation deter an unstable, violent predator from harming defenseless people in what is already set aside as a 'gun free zone'? I do not think so. People hurt people and I don't believe it is coincidental that these types of horrific killings

continually take place in “gun-free zones” (schools, malls, movie theaters, etc...). Guns, knives, bats, screwdrivers, etc...are only tools.

Maybe we should be looking at our society and trying to determine what it was in these criminal’s lives that stimulated these terrible events.

Please do not think like Greta.

Please consider the facts.

Respectfully Submitted,

Joseph Combe

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Statistics found on web at:

<http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-8>

Drowning data found in public library resource:

The Statistical Abstract of the U.S. (a U. S. Government publication)