

Good Morning,

This morning I hear in the news headlines that an armed gunman was able to storm a school bus in Alabama and take a six year old child hostage. It seems like everywhere we turn there are so many new stories of gun violence and weapons in the hands of those who are desperately in need of mental health care that it is impossible to keep up. It is time to make real changes like those made in most of the rest of the developed world where gun ownership is either out of the question or heavily regulated. While a total weapons ban is, I understand, completely impractical at this point given how deep in this our nation finds itself, things like mandatory and costly liability insurance, air tight background checks with no loopholes for any reason, and a 100% ban on assault weapons are hardly a lot to ask of gun owners. It is absurd and incomprehensible that we are required to insure ourselves against liability when it comes to our vehicles but that those among us who choose to own weapons have no such requirement.

As the mother of two children it seems such a basic formula to me. If my child were to pick up a brick and hit someone with it the first thing I would do is take away his weapon. Only then could I begin to talk to him about why it isn't ok to harm people. I urge you to follow this formula. First work tirelessly to remove easy access to weapons. Require checks, mandate liability insurance and if it can not be paid take away the guns. Then and only then can we begin to pour our energy into helping those in our communities who so easily slip through the cracks when it comes to mental healthcare.

Sincerely,

Julia Mathien

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