

The tragic events of mass shootings have left many Americans with feelings of sadness, anger and fear. As expected, there has been an outcry from many people, both civilians and public officials alike, in order to curtail the chances of such tragedies from recurring. However, I believe that the media and many public officials have provided carefully chosen information in order to instill fear into the public perspective on the issue of firearms and that, due to such emotional rhetoric, the public has sadly been misinformed as to the truth about firearms as well as the modern need for our second constitutional amendment. Fear is the enemy of logic, therefore rather than making decisions and enforcing laws that may well negatively affect Americans' quality of life and jeopardize their safety, all citizens and public officials must make it their duty to explore all methods of reducing such violent occurrences.

If any laws are to be passed that inevitably prevent citizens from owning firearms or limit the ability of citizens to protect themselves by limiting the effect of such firearms, than such laws will leave guns in the hands of only the police, military and criminals. We all know that criminals will have no intent of voluntarily surrendering their weapons nor will they abide by any new firearm laws. When citizens are unable to protect themselves and their families, this leaves them vulnerable to heinous acts of such criminals. Proof of this can be seen in Chicago where some of the strictest gun laws are in place yet Chicago has some of the highest gun violence and major crimes rates in the country. This is no coincidence.

The United States possesses the highest gun ownership per capita rate in the world, yet ranks 24th in the world in terms of its murder rate per capita. We can also examine other countries with strict gun control laws, such as Britain and Australia, and evaluate the number and rate of major crimes in these countries where citizens are unable to protect themselves. In addition, since the commencement and expiration of the Assault Weapons Ban, the number of gun related homicides and non-deadly incidents has decreased. This goes to show that banning **what our government has labeled as "assault weapons"** based on cosmetics does not affect gun crime rates, and that whatever we are currently doing, we are doing it right. We cannot allow the actions of a few mentally ill individuals to destroy our second amendment and limit the ability of honest Americans to defend themselves and their families. Even this meeting has been named "Gun Violence Prevention & Children's Safety". Based on statistics and history together, our children, as well as ourselves and our rights may well be in much greater jeopardy if additional gun control laws are instilled. Therefore, if gun control laws have proven ineffective in the past, why do we assume that anything will change this time? As unpleasant as it sounds, terrible events will always occur, yet this does not mean people should be so hasty to change laws and infringe upon our constitutional rights in order to relieve peoples' panic and fear. Most importantly, if our second amendment is infringed upon, us American citizens would be rendered defenseless to stopping any of our other rights from being violated. This could and would open the door to further deterioration of the U.S. Constitution. (<http://www.conservativedailynews.com/2012/12/gun-control-statistics-that-reasonable-people-should-know/>)

I believe that a lot more time and energy needs to be taken to explore how we can reduce the possibilities of events like those in Aurora, Colorado, Columbine High School and Newtown, Connecticut. It is understood that such tragic events caused an outcry by the public for public officials to take immediate action. However, I think we need not to "jump the gun" (for lack of better words), and need not burden nor condemn gun owners and manufacturers. Instead we need to examine the broad spectrum of what contributes to these acts such as our current mental health system, our children's exposure to violence through video games and Hollywood's glorification of gun violence, and proper education to the safety, proper storage of, and efficacy of firearms. Limiting our rights and increasing/incorporating taxes and fees in an already unstable economy will solve nothing. So let us not allow ourselves to infringe upon our greatest and most important constitutional amendment by making decisions based on the emotion of fear, but rather maintain and uphold such an amendment by thinking and making decisions with logic. Thank you for your time and unbiased understanding.

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