

First, let me say that my heart goes out to those who have lost loved ones in Sandy Hook, and those First Responders who had to deal with the unspeakable horror of that day. As a parent, grandparent, AND first responder, I thank God every day that it was not me who had to be there. On that day, we saw the absolute best side of human nature, and a side that represents abject evil. Let me state up front that I don't know what can be done to stop events like this from happening in the future, short of re-engineering the human brain. Until human evolution somehow short circuits our propensity to harm our fellows, things like this will still happen, as they have since Cain slew Abel with an assault rock. Quick, politically motivated fixes are not going to stop it. Remember, you can't legislate common sense or morality. Gun control is not the answer, because only law abiding people will give up their guns, criminals won't. America has tried Prohibition before, and only made petty thugs crime czars by doing it. We Americans are not going to get instant gratification on this one.

There are those who say that the Second Amendment doesn't guarantee a person the right to own a so-called assault weapon; that the founding fathers did not have AR-15's in mind when the Constitution was written. Those folks apparently did not pay much attention in American History class. Until the first third of the 20th Century, the civilian population of the United States had access to better firearm technology than the US soldier. In every conflict until World War 2, when the M1 Garand rifle was made standard, the firepower edge went to civilian citizens. In the Revolution, while both the British Army and American organized Militia carried wildly inaccurate smoothbore muskets, the Unorganized Militia units carried reasonably accurate Kentucky rifles. Henry repeating rifles were available to civilians BEFORE they were offered to the Army in the Civil War. One of the reasons for Custer's dismal failure at the Little Big Horn was the short-sightedness of the Army in arming their troopers with single shot Trapdoor Springfields, while Sitting Bull had Henry and Winchester repeating rifles at his disposal. Semi-auto rifles, shotguns, and handguns were available to the general public well before the military and police routinely used them. Our Founding Fathers knew and embraced the fact that a free people should be afforded the same level of personal protection as those individuals whose job was keeping order.

Gun control SHOULD be keeping it holstered until it's needed, and then, and only then, using it properly. On a more positive note, I hope that we will finally see an improvement in mental health treatment. It is not the firearm that is the killer, but the dysfunctional mind that causes the gun to be misused. A firearm, like a chainsaw, is capable of doing horrendous damage if misused. Until it is used as a weapon, it is merely a tool. Whether it has a muzzle brake, bayonet lug, pistol grip, or other option, it is a TOOL....an inanimate object that needs INTENT to have it do harm. Quick fixes are usually poor ones in the long run, and I hope that that stays in the minds of our elected officials while pondering this problem. While I'm not a physicist or rocket scientist, I DO remember learning Newton's Third Law, in Junior High School...."Every action has an equal and opposite reaction." Ironically, that is the same principle many semi-auto firearms operate on. Those who write our laws should remember it, also.

Timothy Richmond