

I live in Sandy Hook, CT and have one son who attends Newtown High School and one son who attends Newtown Middle School.

I grew up in Australia and lived there in 1996 when strict guns laws including the banning of all semiautomatic weapons were introduced after 13 mass shootings in 18 years. Since 1996 there have been no mass incidents in Australia and gun deaths have been reduced by around half. So I know that gun control laws work in reducing gun related deaths.

When it came time for us to settle in the US my first concern was gun violence in US schools. Yes, that was the first thing that entered my mind. I was well aware of Columbine and that the US had one of the highest incidence of gun related deaths in the world. So I spent six months researching and looking for a town with the lowest crime rate possible and the best schools. I found that town to be Newtown, CT. I believed that here my children would be safe in school and in the community, and for five years that proved to be true. I had found a quintessential New England town with a Norman Rockwell quality, a strong sense of community and a rich culture. It felt like home immediately and we felt safe in this corner of America.

That is, until that fateful day when we received an alert that all Newtown schools were in lockdown due to a shooter in one of our schools. At that moment we did not know which school was in danger. You can only imagine how we felt. After what seemed like an eternity we received news that the high school and middle school were currently safe. A rush of relief for our sons was mixed with the awful realization that a whole school of parents was not so lucky. Then we received frantic text and email messages from my son at the high school who was watching the whole thing unfold on his tablet telling us he was scared that a second shooter could be coming to Newtown High, since it was less than a mile away from Sandy Hook Elementary School. To read a text message from your son telling you he is lockdown due to a school shooter and that he is scared for his life is one of the most horrifying experiences you can imagine.

Connecticut legislators, lead the nation! If this could happen in the safest town in America it could happen anywhere. This is part of an epidemic of violence that is increasing in frequency. The worst mass incidents in US history have occurred in the last six years. Time is of the essence. Ban all semiautomatic weapons, including existing ones, institute a buy back program and destroy all the guns that come in, ban all ammunition magazines with over 6 rounds, introduce strict universal background checks, and 28 day waiting periods. Connecticut, the US is at a crossroads and the nation's eyes are on you. Show America the way!

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