

Mass Shootings Have Led to Mass Numbness

Half a million kids plan to wake us up.

Can we find solutions by seeking the interests of others?

Even in the painful aftermath of the February Parkland, Florida school shooting, the gun debate has gone nowhere. The reoccurring cries of proponents and opponents of gun control continue to rise again. Instead of seeking a policy solution, Americans seem numb. From Columbine to the present, we have failed to find meaningful solutions to reduce mass shootings at schools through gun control.

This weekend's March for Our Lives, with its expected turnout of at least 500,000, hopes to jolt Washington out of the cycle of rhetoric, soundbites, and inaction.

Embed from Getty Images

2018 Mass Shooting Deaths, By the Numbers

According to the Gun Violence Archive, as of March 21, 2018, America has had 48 mass shootings. Those shooting led to 63 deaths and 189 injuries. The Archive defines mass shootings as four or more killed or injured, not including the perpetrator. The Parkland Shooting remains the most devastating mass shooting this year, 17 deaths and 17 injuries.

Known for its unyielding fight in the right to bear arms, The National Rifle Association (NRA) is a leader in firearms education training. The NRA website includes more than 125,000 certified instructors that train more than 1 million gun owners a year. The group began as a firearms training and education association for marksmanship. It has strengthened its focus to defend Second Amendment through the years. With the "right to bear arms" central to its cause, has the NRA become numb to its roots?

"Ineligible" Voters, but Eligible Voices

For nearly two decades, the NRA has fought challenges to gun control legislation at the federal and state level. The NRA faces its toughest test in the survivors of the Parkland Shooting. These survivors, the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, show no signs of letting up, though most of them are ineligible to vote. Through social media and mass protests across the nation, these survivors demand support in forcing national and state legislatures to pass meaningful laws to reduce gun violence.

Embed from Getty Images

Although these survivors are ineligible to vote, they do have a window of opportunity to make change. According to the independent Quinnipiac University National Poll, American voters support stricter gun laws 66-31 percent. This represents the highest level of support conducted by this organization. In addition, the Quinnipiac University National Poll cited support for universal background checks as 97-3 percent among gun owners, 67-29 percent for a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons, and 75-17 percent that Congress needs to do something to reduce gun violence. Twenty-two years ago, Australia banned rapid-fire guns after 35 people were killed in Port Arthur. According to a 2016 Journal of American Medical Association article, Australia has not had a mass shooting incident, a single incident in which five or more people are killed, since. Could the United States reap the same benefits if we banned rapid-fire guns the way Australia did, or are we content remaining numb?

Embed from Getty Images

Serve the Interests of the Vulnerable

In light of the Parkland Shooting, The Giffords Law Center To Prevent Gun Violence identified three policy solutions that relate to this incident: prevent access to guns by enacting laws for safe storage, raise the minimum age from 18 to 21 to buy semiautomatic weapons, and disarm dangerous people. From a biblical perspective, I found our motive and policy solution to reduce gun violence in Philippians 2:3-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interest of the others." In considering the victims family and the survivors, I support conducting universal background checks. We should require training for anyone who wants to purchase a gun, at age 21 years or older. I also support banning rapid-fire guns as they did in Australia, and enacting laws for safe storage. It's hard to be numb when you look out for the best interest for others, more than yourself.