

Testimony of Dianna Muller

FOUNDER OF DC PROJECT

United States House of Representatives
House Judiciary Committee, Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland
Security
An Unending Crisis: Essential Steps to Reducing Gun Violence and Mass Shootings
May 20, 2021

[An Unending Crisis: Essential Steps to Reducing Gun Violence and Mass Shootings”](#)

Thank you, Chairwoman Jackson-Lee, Ranking Member Biggs, and Committee Members,

Thank you for inviting me to discuss this critical topic and to brainstorm strategies to save lives. For decades now, the conversation always leads to the gun control advocates pushing for more laws and more restrictions. It's time to look at the evidence and acknowledge the truth. Gun control laws do not produce the desired results. It's time to elevate the conversation with alternative solutions.

The truth is we all want the same thing. We all want to be safe and for our families to be safe. The difference is how we believe that is achieved. For over 30 years, several major cities have adopted the strictest gun control policies across the country. Based on years of evidence in the towns like St. Louis, Washington, D.C., Baltimore, and Chicago, it's apparent that these policies do not work. The results are the same. Knowing that average citizens are less capable of defending themselves, criminals are emboldened, crime soars, and communities are less safe. If these policies worked, these cities would be the shining example of gun control as a success.

On March 23rd of this year, I watched Dr. Suzanna Hupp testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee. I was struck that she also testified in 1993, 2013, 2018, again this year, 2021. I find it striking that the truth she preached for three decades is the same truth she preaches now. **Mass killers prefer gun-free zones, magazine capacity limits are ineffective, and she was legislated out of the means to protect herself.** She holds legislators, people like you, responsible for her parent's death. ¹ Gun control laws failed and cost lives.

We always hear about 'common-sense gun control.

- Common sense is that cities that ARE PLAGUED with violence should adopt the policies of cities that AREN'T plagued with violence.
- Common sense is that when you make more rules, more laws, more registrations, more fees, it makes protecting yourself a rich man's game. These policies disproportionately affect lower-income, minority communities. The Second Amendment is for every American, and gun control is steeped in racism.
- Common sense is holding criminals accountable for breaking the laws instead of releasing them to jail, raising bail for them to get out of jail, or encouraging them to be 'more confrontational.'
- Common sense is that women are smaller and less equipped for violence, and a firearm is a great equalizer.
- Common sense is allowing citizens to protect themselves.

Responsible gun owners are exhausted from the constant attacks on the Second Amendment. I founded the *DC Project, Women for Gun Rights*, because we were tired of listening to women who don't represent us. Women who are not experts in guns or violence demand that legislators restrict our constitutional rights.

¹ Hupp Testimony. 1993- <https://youtu.be/FgrIsuO5PLc> 2021- https://youtu.be/q6fNSGI2_tg.

I sit before you today honored to speak on behalf of the members of the DC Project: mothers, daughters, young and old, Black, White, Latino and Asian, hunters and competitors, transgender and straight, #metoo and #notme, on the political left and right. **The Second Amendment wins on the intersectionality scale.** For example:

- Lara Smith, from California, is a staunch Democrat and the National Spokesperson for the Liberal Gun Club and understands that the Second Amendment is a constitutional, not a partisan, issue;
- Mia Farinelli, from Virginia, is a 17-year-old 3-gun competitive shooter that stands 5'4", weighs 85 pounds; an honor roll student that speaks two languages and is learning a third;
- Robyn Sandoval, from Texas, is a left-leaning, reformed anti-gun mom who now heads up A Girl and a Gun, a nationwide women's shooting club;
- Gina Roberts, from California, is a transgender woman who knows the Second Amendment is for everyone;
- Corinne Mosher, from Kansas, is a concert violinist turned tactical firearms instructor and took keeping her family safe seriously;
- Amanda Johnson, from Virginia, was raped at gunpoint on a gun-free campus, yards from the police station; even though she had a concealed carry license, she left it at home because she wanted to follow the rules. Her attacker went on to rape and killed his next victim. Amanda is confident she could have made a difference in their outcomes if she had not been disarmed.
- Lucretia Hughes, from Georgia, is an African American who strongly advocates for the 2nd Amendment, in part because she lost her son to gang violence when a felon used an illegally obtained gun to shoot him in the head;
- Gabby Franco, from Virginia, is a mom and a naturalized citizen from **Venezuela** who has seen the effects of gun control in her native country; she will tell you about the decline of Venezuela. In 1998, it was the wealthiest Latin American country until Hugo Chavez was elected and enacted robust gun control with the promise of reducing gun violence. His regulations created a chokehold that forced gun shops and ranges to close. Ammunition became scarce and expensive. Within ten years of registering all firearms, the banning of private gun ownership began while criminals remained armed and dangerous. Registration led to confiscation. Now citizens live at the mercy of criminals and the government. Small businesses have been destroyed, and people stopped working. Production stopped, and inflation made everyday goods unattainable or unavailable. Citizens live like prisoners in their homes since criminals have no fear of accountability. Venezuela is in chaos, a socialist nightmare. Gabby is committed to not letting that happen in America.
- Kristi McMains, from Indiana, vigorously fought off a stranger's attack in a parking garage for several minutes before getting to her gun and shooting the assailant. She fought so hard she broke all ten nails, had fibers in her teeth from his gloves, and broken ribs.

- Melissa Schuster, from Illinois, was brutally beaten, stabbed 17 times, raped, and left for dead in her parent's home when a stranger kicked in the door. She will never be unarmed again.
- Nikki Goesser, from Tennessee, her husband was shot and killed by her stalker in a gun-free zone while her legal firearm remained in her vehicle, like the sound, law-abiding citizen she is.

Last year, a record number of Americans became first-time gun owners. Among the reported 8.4 million **first-time** gun owners, nearly 3.4 million were women. In 2015, one in 10 women identified as a gun owner. In 2020, one in four did. Let that sink in; 25% of women are gun owners. Women have been seeking professional firearms training in the past 14 months in droves. Instructors nationwide report an increase in students up to 200%. Although trainers don't ask political affiliations or former beliefs in gun ownership, a large number of students indicated they had formerly been "anti-gun." Reasons behind their decisions have ranged from pandemic behavior scares, rioting, and defund the police movements. They have realized that they are their first responder. They have learned that guns save lives.

Being intellectually honest, one would consider the civilian defensive uses of firearms, according to the government's own CDC data estimates over 500,000 times to 3 million times per year.² Aren't those lives saved worth as much as the lives that have been taken by criminal homicide? These gun control laws sound good but do nothing to prevent criminals from committing crimes and often cost responsible gun owners their lives or subject them to trauma by not being able to defend themselves. Guns save lives.

It's apparent to everyone paying attention in America that legislators believe guns save lives. We saw you surround yourselves in the Capitol with a wall and an armed military presence. The hypocrisy doesn't go unnoticed. What about ordinary Americans who don't have the luxury of having someone else carry guns for us to protect themselves? Each of you is pro-gun. Every day in this very building, you are surrounded and protected by men and women with firearms. It seems like legislators are not against weapons; they are just against the citizenry having firearms.

Words and phrases like 'epidemic,' 'ghost guns,' 'weapons of war,' 'assault weapon,' 'public health crisis' are fear-mongering and designed to scare the uneducated public. Merriam Webster defines the word "epidemic," when used as a noun, as an *outbreak of disease that spreads quickly and affects many individuals at the same time or an outbreak or product of sudden rapid spread, growth, or development*^[iii]. Despite a well-orchestrated effort to advance a false narrative, the facts and figures indicate that there is no "epidemic of gun violence."

² http://www.ncdsv.org/images/IOM-NRC_Priorities-for-Research-to-reduce-the-threat-of-firearm-related-violence_2013.pdf

The 2020 numbers indicate that there were 43,553-gun deaths. 24,156 (55.5%) were suicide. 1472 were defensive use. Unintentional shootings were 2306. Murder/suicide were 574. Gang violence accounted for a large majority of the remaining 15,045. Out of 328 million people, and using the figures that include gang violence, the chances of a non-gang member, the average citizen of being involved in a crime with a firearm is .00004587³.

Gun homicide, non-fatal gun crime, and [overall violent crime rates](#) remain far lower today than in the early 1990s, even though the number of guns per capita has increased by about 50% since then.

Many cities have seen significant spikes in violent crime in the last year. There is [ample evidence](#)⁴ that those crime spikes are mainly attributable to changing policing tactics resulting from widespread civil unrest and sociological phenomena associated with the COVID-19 pandemic and not increasing lawful gun sales.

Gun owners know we are being targeted and discriminated against politically, financially, and socially. Our country is divided into two groups, the bullied and the bullies. There is no civility left in our country. We have lost all respect for life, and in some cases, people cheer the death of those they disagree with. The division that has taken place in our country in the past few years is devastating.

Gun owners are growing fatigued of being bullied, mischaracterized, and demonized. We are not the enemy, yet this President has vowed to 'defeat the NRA,' which is me. So far this year alone, there are 29 bills introduced that have the Second Amendment in the crosshairs. Under the Obama administration, Operation Chokepoint, the DOJ and banking regulators were directed to 'encourage' banks and credit card processors to refuse to do business with lawful firearms manufacturers⁵.

In 2019, I attended the New York Times DealBook event. It exposed the lengths that corporate America is willing to go to bypass the legislative process and enact their gun control agendas, regardless of whether the American people want it or not.

The level of 'canceling' has hit an all-time high with big-tech and social media moguls silencing conservatives, including President Trump. I do not care how you feel or what you think about him. Still, every American that respects the constitution should be outraged over censorship and squelching any American's First Amendment rights.

³ Gun Violence Archive (<https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/past-tolls>) Accessed May 18, 2021.

⁴ "Explaining the Great 2020 Homicide Spike" (<https://reason.com/volokh/2021/02/01/explaining-the-great-2020-homicide-spike/>) Accessed May 18, 2021.

⁵ "Operation Choke Point"(<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/volokhconspiracy/wp/2014/05/24/operation-choke-point/>) Accessed May 18, 2021.

As an instructor, I've had the honor of introducing many people, especially women, to firearms training. I notice many women go through amazing transformations. Their self-confidence is palatable. I had one woman who was terrified at the beginning of class, and at the end, she looked me in the eye, took hold of my shoulders, and said, "You have changed my life. I. Am. A. Different. Person." I see it time and time again how a little education can go a long way! While I fully appreciate you considering my testimony, you could get a better appreciation of the importance our community places on and the safe handling and operation of firearms if you were to come to the range.

As a police officer, I enforced the laws you created, and I had a front-row seat to the justice system. It's frustrating to see the revolving door where prosecutors reduce or drop charges and judges give minimal sentencing. In the effort to reform the criminal justice system for people who violated laws passed by congress, it is ironic that more regulations are being proposed that would turn ordinary, law-abiding citizens into criminals. Perhaps before we burden law-abiding citizens with more laws, we enforce the laws that are already on the books.

I am appalled to see the liberal policies that have permitted the lawlessness in Minneapolis and Portland, and Seattle to go unchecked. Equally disturbing is the hate and discontent looted towards our police officers, only human and imperfect but now being bastardized and undermined. Gun control policy combined with defunding the police efforts are especially dangerous, and homicides and overall crime have skyrocketed in those cities.

Police have no duty to protect (*Warren v. District of Columbia*⁶), and these days they can't even defend themselves. At the same time, some of you are advocating to impose restrictions on the very right that allows me to protect myself from enemies foreign and domestic; in the next breath, you are calling to defund the police. What exactly is the goal?

Police chiefs are political appointees, and I can tell you from experience, they don't always represent the rank and file. The officers that understand the constitution and respect their oath of office do not support gun control. I'm confident that the officers watching Minneapolis, Portland, and Seattle burn do not support the lawlessness that their liberal administrations are supporting. The good people in America recognize the **politically sanctioned violence**, calling good evil and evil good. Many see Mr. and Mrs. McKloskey from St. Louis, Missouri, and Mr. Kyle Rittenhouse from Wisconsin, as persecuted victims while watching BLM and ANTIFA behave as domestic terrorists and liberal governments turning a blind eye to the death and destruction.

Many things can be learned from tragedies like the Parkland School shooting. Much attention has been given to the well-funded Students Demand Action, calling for more gun control, but I encourage you to read Andrew Pollack's book, *Why Meadow Died: The People and Policies that Created Parkland*. It points out the repeated failure of government, laws, and liberal policy.

⁶ *Warren v. District of Columbia* (<https://law.justia.com/cases/district-of-columbia/court-of-appeals/1981/79-6-3.html>) Accessed May 18, 2021.

Students saw something and said something to a school administration official, but the policy that allowed problem students three misdemeanors per year before calling the police permitted this behavior to exacerbate; law enforcement responded to the shooter's residence more than 30 times, but because of leniency with juveniles, no action was taken. The ultimate failure in Parkland was from the responding officers that fateful day. They remained outside while students were being murdered inside. Parkland reminds us that law enforcement has no constitutional duty to protect, and the best-intentioned liberal policies are dangerous and simply do not work.

Suppose you ask what would have stopped the Parkland shooter. In that case, it's the same answer as in every shooting: accountability early on and confrontation with equal or greater force during the incident.

During my years serving the citizens of my community, I responded to countless calls for help. If you have ever called 911, you know it can feel like a lifetime for them to answer, let alone how long it takes for help to arrive. I do not wish for anyone to be defenseless, so I encourage people to seek training, at least unarmed, situational awareness and flashlight training. Learn to be a hard target. I encourage essential 'stop the bleed' training and firearms training if they choose. Tourniquet training should be our modern-day CPR training. It's easy to carry and easy to use, and every American should know how to use it. Prepare to be your first responder.

When inexperienced politicians talk passionately about firearms, and often awkward and inaccurate, recently, President Biden commented about how no one needs a hundred rounds and mentioned deer in Kevlar vests. With all due respect, I will remind all of you and the President that our founding fathers had just liberated our country from a tyrannical government that was taxing us to death and demanding we give up our guns. The Second Amendment isn't about hunting; it's about "*We the people*" and a "*tyrannical government.*"

In 2013, then-Senator Joe Biden advocated for his wife to fire two blasts from a double-barreled shotgun into the air to settle any kind of problem. That is not sound advice for a couple of blatant reasons. Firing carelessly in the air without knowing where the rounds will impact is a violation of one of the four fundamentals of firearms safety. You are responsible for every game that leaves your firearm. Secondly, if that doesn't 'settle the problem' and criminals attack you, you have wasted the two rounds that could have saved your life.

In July of 1995, from the floor of the Senate, Biden said, "During my twelve and half years as a member of this body, I have never believed that additional gun control or federal registration of guns would reduce crime. I am convinced that a criminal who wants a firearm can get one through illegal, untraceable, unregistered sources, with or without gun control."⁷ My testimony remains the same, but President Biden's has not.

⁷ <https://www.thetrace.org/2020/10/biden-gun-plan-rights-history-crime-bill-politics-election/>

In a September or 2019⁸ interview, Congresswoman Jackson-Lee described the weight of an AR-15 as being as heavy as ten moving boxes and referred to the 50 caliber bullets it uses. I've already mentioned the 85-pound 17-year-old that shoots competitively and uses an AR-15. For the record, an AR-15 weighs a mere 6.8 pounds, about the weight of a newborn baby. AR-15's come in many calibers, but .50 caliber is not one of them. The description is not accurate, and I find it offensive that politicians speak with such disregard for the truth. Using words to incite emotion and fear-monger is unethical.

PROVEN FAILURES/UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

RED FLAG LAWS

As a police officer, I oppose red flag laws. Every state already has a vehicle in place to handle people that are in crisis. If someone is a threat to themselves or others, they can be held for a 72 Hour Emergency Order of Detention that requires a psychological evaluation. Where is the compassion for someone in crisis when the police arrive at their home to remove one of the many means of harm, offer no services, and leave them defenseless? Furthermore, in light of the bullies and cancel culture in the world today, red flag laws only make it easier for someone to harass a 'deplorable,' a gun owner, an Asian, a transgender person, the list goes on. Someone with malicious intent can target anyone. We all have stories of divorces and how ugly the battle becomes. If a spouse wants to disarm their ex, red flag laws are the way to do that.

As a front-line police officer, I can testify that executing red flag laws puts law enforcement officers at risk. Many firearms owners see red flag laws as unconstitutional, and sending an officer to their door is a recipe for disaster. It's already happened in Maryland when a 61-year-old man refused to comply with a red flag law.⁹ Red flag laws could discourage people in crisis from seeking help for fear of being disarmed. Further, the Supreme Court just ruled against the seizure of firearms in a case similar to a red flag law.¹⁰

GUN-FREE ZONES

94% of mass public shootings have occurred in gun-free zones¹¹. Gun-free zones offer the highest probability of success for a demented person to inflict harm on a large number of people without meeting resistance. Mass shooters are constantly stopped by being satisfied with equal or greater force. There was recently a change in the definition of mass shootings from four to three, which only creates more significant numbers to push an agenda.

⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhY7AkjxvA>

⁹ <https://www.capitalgazette.com/news/ac-cn-red-flag-20191001-zjzsbra735eatkkm2qmobz5z4a-story.html> (accessed May 17, 2021)

¹⁰ <https://www.npr.org/2021/05/17/997487541/supreme-court-restricts-police-authority-to-enter-a-home-without-a-warrant>

¹¹ <https://crimeresearch.org/2018/06/more-misleading-information-from-bloombergs-everytown-for-gun-safety-on-guns-analysis-of-recent-mass-shootings/>

UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Even though Sen. Blumenthal claims in a Senate Judiciary hearing last week that 95% of Americans support universal background checks, Americans speak for themselves when these policies are on the ballots. Some fail, and some pass by the narrowest of margins. Neither indicates that 95% of Americans want UBC or more gun control. Here are two instances:

- In 2016, Universal Background Check was on the ballot in ME and failed¹².
- In 2019 in Maryland, hardly a pro-gun state, UBC and 3D printer gun bills failed to pass¹³.

A joint study conducted by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the University of California at Davis Violence Prevention Research Program found that California's much-touted mandated background checks had no impact on gun deaths^{14, 15}

To further point out the failure of universal background checks, here is a list of recent attackers and alleged attackers who have passed background checks for their guns. These include:

- Ian Long (Thousand Oaks, California)
- Robert Bowers (Pittsburgh synagogue, Pennsylvania)
- Nikolas Cruz (Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Florida)
- Devin Patrick Kelley (Sutherland Springs, Texas)
- Omar Mateen (Pulse nightclub, Florida)
- Stephen Paddock (Las Vegas, Nevada)
- Christopher Harper-Mercer (Umpqua Community College shooting, Oregon)
- Vester Flanagan (Roanoke, news crew shooting, Virginia),
- John Russell Houser (Lafayette theater shooting, Louisiana),
- Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez (Chattanooga National Guard shooting, Tennessee)
- Dylann Roof (Charleston church shooting, South Carolina),
- Elliot Rodger (Santa Barbara campus shooting, California),
- Aaron Alexis (Navy Yard, Washington, DC),
- Wade Michael Page (Sikh Temple, Wisconsin),
- James Holmes (Aurora theater, Colorado),
- Jared Loughner (Tucson, Arizona),
- Nidal Hasan (Fort Hood 2009, Texas)

¹² [https://ballotpedia.org/Maine_Background_Checks_for_Gun_Sales,_Question_3_\(2016\)](https://ballotpedia.org/Maine_Background_Checks_for_Gun_Sales,_Question_3_(2016))

¹³ <https://baltimore.cbslocal.com/2019/04/09/measure-to-require-background-checks-on-private-rifle-shotgun-sales-and-ban-of-3d-printed-gun-blueprints-fail-in-maryland/>

¹⁴ <https://health.ucdavis.edu/health-news/newsroom/study-does-not-find-population-level-changes-in-firearm-homicide-or-suicide-rates-in-california/2018/11>

¹⁵ <https://fee.org/articles/california-s-background-check-law-had-no-impact-on-gun-deaths-johns-hopkins-study-finds>

In response to anti-gun legislation pushed through by razor-thin majorities, dominated by large cities, we have seen half the country denounce gun control and declare themselves Second Amendment sanctuaries.¹⁶

In 2020, Virginia anti-gun legislators pushed through gun control laws and executive orders, and 98% of the counties declared themselves Second Amendment sanctuaries. Does that sound like legislators are listening to their constituents? Does that sound like 95% of Americans want Universal Background Checks?

MAGAZINE CAPACITY RESTRICTIONS

Magazine capacity restrictions are another well-intentioned, ineffective concept. Based on the argument that it would decrease death in a mass shooting, ten dead people are unacceptable. Furthermore, if someone is going to commit murder, they are likely to subvert this law as well. It also shows that advocates don't understand how quickly a magazine can be changed. One life lost in a criminal homicide is one too many. And recall Dr. Suzanna Hupp's testimony that it did not work.

'ASSAULT WEAPONS' BAN

According to the FBI, more deaths occur from hammers and blunt objects each year than are not the cause of mass murders. Common sense tells me that you will go after the *next* gun when the next tragedy happens if you succeed in banning this gun. My own experience with prior Assault Weapons Ban was it was ineffective. I saw zero impact on the streets, and the FBI statistics confirmed it. More people are killed annually with blunt objects/hammers or personal weapons (hands, fists, and feet) than with rifles of all types, including the much talked about AR15/weapon of war¹⁷. Where is the common sense in targeting that gun? It's all a fear-mongering.

¹⁶https://www.thetruthaboutguns.com/what-the-media-wont-report-nearly-half-the-country-is-now-a-second-amendment-sanctuary/?fbclid=IwAR2ZBixGRLQcSLgBmRbCM7ITE0Bc6fi72tMIVYL6HgQUahcPK67Hch79Z_g

¹⁷ : <https://ucr.fbi.gov/crime-in-the-u.s/2019/crime-in-the-u.s.-2019/tables/expanded-homicide-data-table-8.xls>

Murder Victims by Weapon, 2015–2019					
Download Excel					
Weapons	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Total	13,847	15,355	15,206	14,446	13,927
Total firearms:	9,143	10,398	11,014	10,445	10,258
Handguns	6,194	6,778	7,052	6,683	6,368
Rifles	215	300	389	305	364
Shotguns	248	247	263	237	200
Other guns	152	172	178	164	45
Firearms, type not stated	2,334	2,901	3,132	3,056	3,281
Knives or cutting instruments	1,533	1,562	1,608	1,542	1,476
Blunt objects (clubs, hammers, etc.)	438	466	474	455	397
Personal weapons (hands, fists, feet, etc.) ¹	651	668	715	712	600

WAITING PERIODS

As a police officer, I responded to countless reports of domestic violence. Waiting periods have proven to be deadly. Restraining orders are simply pieces of paper that, to do protect victims, only allow the system to prosecute for violating the terms, which are generally not illegal. Security measures are fine but still do nothing to protect the victim. I remember a woman in NJ was stabbed to death in her driveway while waiting to be permitted “allowed” to defend herself with a firearm. This tactic may seem like a good idea but proves to be a failure and cost innocent lives.¹⁸

ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

We are here to talk about meaningful policies that will save lives. I was a police officer for 22 years, a firearms instructor for over 30 years, and a professional shooter for the past ten years. I am an expert on firearms safety, and I’ve seen my fair share of the violence humans can perpetrate against each other. I would submit to you that working WITH me instead of dismissing my experiences and my expertise in these matters would move the needle when it comes to making your communities safer. I would also point out that the firearms industry places a lot of attention on safety and have many effective programs.

- The Hunter’s Education program has proven successful by exponentially lowering firearms accidents/fatalities. When Colorado implemented hunter’s education, fatal accidents were cut in half, and non-fatal were substantially decreased. The program only continues to prove its value in saving lives as the rates continued to drop to the lowest to date. Link Here is more information on Hunter’s Education.¹⁹

¹⁸ NJ Woman Murdered Waiting for a Pistol (<https://thefederalistpapers.org/second-amendment-2/outrageous-nj-woman-brutally-murdered-while-waiting-for-pistol-permit-to-protect-herself>) May 17, 2021

¹⁹ https://www.hunter-ed.com/colorado/studyGuide/Why-Hunter-Education/20300601_165341/

- The Kid SAFE (Safety Around Firearms Education) Foundation takes the target audience a step further and focuses on all children, not just hunters. Originating in Oregon, the program is ready to go nationwide. Reaching children in urban areas with a higher mortality rate or children with English as a second language is imperative. We should be treating firearm safety similar to water safety.²⁰ Every kid in the country should be trained, with or without guns, in their homes. Zero firearms accidents are the only acceptable goal. Let's teach our youth safety, discipline, and respect for firearms at young age kids when kids are more likely to follow the rules.²¹
- FASTER Saves Lives is a school security program. Created by concerned parents, law enforcement, and nationally recognized safety and medical experts, FASTER is a groundbreaking, non-profit program that gives educators practical violence response training at no cost to the school districts.²²
- Suicide makes up over 50% of gun deaths. Hold My Guns, Walk the Talk America, Rachel's Challenge, Active Heroes, Mission 22 are among the long list of organizations that partner or stem from the firearms community. National Shooting Sports Foundation partners with the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention to provide resources and support to firearms retailers and ranges.
- National Train a Teacher Day²³ is coming up on June 19th. Instructors across the country offer free firearms safety training to teachers.
- Encourage training and empower citizens to be prepared, not scared. Non-lethal training includes situational awareness, flashlight training, and defensive fighting styles, as well as first aid training like 'stop the bleed.' Tourniquets are lightweight, easy to carry, and easy to use. It's modern-day CPR training, and there's no reason every American shouldn't know how to use it and have one within reach!

All of these programs are independently developed community education and safety programs, not NRA programs. However, I would like to point out that the NRA is the oldest civil rights organization and has been instrumental in firearms education over the years. I am the NRA. I am not the enemy. Millions of responsible American gun owners are not the enemy.

Independent studies would be welcomed. The 1996 Dickey Amendment did not prevent the government from studying guns; it prevented public monies from promoting gun control. The CDC under Obama did a study, and it did not support gun control, and therefore is rarely mentioned²⁴.

- Study the effects of kids on medication and correlation with violent behavior.
- Study the effects of violent video games that desensitize horror and glorifies killing.

²⁰ Link to child causes of death <https://www.childstats.gov/americaschildren/tables/phy7b.asp>

²¹ <https://kidssafefoundation.org>

²² <https://fastersaveslives.org/about-us/>

²³ National Train A teacher Day. (<https://nationaltrainateacherday.com/index.html>) (Accessed May 17, 2021)

²⁴ "Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence" http://www.ncdsv.org/images/IOM-NRC_Priorities-for-Research-to-reduce-the-threat-of-firearm-related-violence_2013.pdf (Accessed May 17, 2021)

- Study how guns save lives.

MENTAL HEALTH

Our national mental health infrastructure was decimated in the 1970s. Long-term facilities across the country were closed, and those patients were released onto the street²⁵. As a police officer, it was always a problem trying to find a bed or access to inpatient or outpatient treatment. Bed availability and insurance/cost were always a hurdle to those that needed help and wanted help. Reports indicate that 10% of homicides, higher for mass killings, 20% of prison inmates, and 30% of homeless, involve mental illness.²⁶

If safety is truly your goal, I'm eager to work with any of you, in a bipartisan way, to support and fund these programs. But if disarming America and fundraising off of tragedy is more important, then I won't expect to hear from you. I'm here to save lives. The DC Project women are available as a resource to all of you. We will meet, talk, teach, instruct—anything we can do-- to achieve safety in our communities through education, not legislation.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak, and I look forward to your questions.

²⁵“The Consequences of Deinstitutionalizing the Severely Mentally Ill:
<https://www.heritage.org/firearms/report/part-ii-the-consequences-deinstitutionalizing-the-severely-mentally-ill>
(Accessed May 17, 2021)

²⁶ “Closing Mental Institutions Made Us Vulnerable to Mass Shootings”
[\(https://www.dailysignal.com/2018/02/28/closing-mental-institutions-made-us-vulnerable-mass-shootings/\)](https://www.dailysignal.com/2018/02/28/closing-mental-institutions-made-us-vulnerable-mass-shootings/)(Accessed May 17, 2021)