

Gun Control will not Bring an End to Mass Shootings

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The latest mass shooting, this time at a Florida high school, was one of the deadliest school shootings since the Columbine massacre in 1999. So far, there have been 17 confirmed deaths in the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and the alleged shooter is in custody.

Americans are understandably searching for answers to stem this terrible epidemic. Unfortunately, as always, many jump immediately to the conclusion that guns and protection of gun rights are what's fueling the recurrence of these crimes. Some suggested that any opposition to gun control legislation is outright immoral. But the often sincere and certainly passionate claims made by those calling for gun control frequently don't add up. The truth is that the problem of mass shootings is not a problem of inadequate gun control; the problem is one of the psychology of mental illness and a media system that creates fame for those who act violently. These mass shooters are copycats who hope to achieve immortality through mass homicide. Gun control is not the answer.

After the Parkland shooting, a number of old and new myths about the Second Amendment and gun control became media narratives. Here are just a few of the more common ones.

1. There Have Already Been 18 Mass Shootings in 2018

While school shootings are a serious problem, there have been frequent exaggerations about just how common they are. One story

that has gained widespread traction is that the Parkland shooting is the 18th school shooting since the beginning of 2018. This statistic was originally cooked up by an organization called *Everytown for Gun Safety*, a pro-gun control nonprofit. Yet, as *The Daily Wire* noted, this statistic is highly misleading. Several of these “shootings” were individuals committing suicide on campus and many others were of stray bullets passing through classroom walls with no injuries taking place. In only a few cases were people other than the shooter actually harmed.

“Of the 17 ‘school shootings’ before Wednesday’s shooting; three students died; roughly 30-35 were injured,” according to *The Daily Wire*. Even *The Washington Post* said the *Everytown* number was “a horrifying statistic - and it is wrong.” “Everytown has long inflated its total by including incidents of gunfire that are not really school shootings,” according to *The Washington Post*.

2. More Guns Means More Crime

One of the most frequent and persistent myths about guns is that the increase of guns in society leads to more crimes or violence in general. However, this hasn’t been the case. Studies demonstrate that gun control laws have not had a noticeable impact in reducing murder rates and violent crime. There is simply no evidence that gun owners are more likely to commit crimes, violent or otherwise.

3. It’s Too Easy to Buy a Gun

In 2015, former President Barack Obama caused a stir when he said, “It’s easier for you to buy a handgun and clips than it is for you to buy a fresh vegetable.” He doubled down in 2016, saying, “We flood communities with so many guns that it is easier for a teenager to buy a Glock than get his hands on a computer or even a book.”

The fact is, there are numerous hurdles to gun ownership. It’s not something that can be done on an immediate whim.

4. Gun Control Works in Other Countries

A frequent claim by gun control advocates is that other countries have stemmed gun violence through strict gun control laws. Australia, in particular, is used as an example for the U.S., as Obama did in 2015:

“We know that other countries in response to one mass shooting have managed to craft laws that almost eliminate mass shootings. The Australian mandatory gun-buyback program removed guns from the hands of many people who would misuse them. We must do the same.”

But the evidence that the law made a huge impact in gun violence is unclear. As a University of Australia report concluded in 2008, “There is little evidence to suggest that [the Australian mandatory gun-buyback program] had any significant effects on firearm homicides.” The report said:

“Although gun buybacks appear to be a logical and sensible policy that helps to placate the public’s fears the evidence so far suggests that the 1996 gun buyback has not translated into any tangible reductions in terms of firearm deaths.”

5. The Second Amendment Is Obsolete and Doesn’t Apply Today

Many gun control advocates have insinuated that the Second Amendment doesn’t apply today because the firearms used by the Founding Fathers were muskets, and that they couldn’t possibly have conceived of the devastating effectiveness of modern weaponry.

But the Founders did not design the Constitution to be a temporary document that would lose its applicability over time. They were quite aware that technological changes would come long after they were gone. They designed the Second Amendment to preserve the individual right to self-defense. Just as the rise of the internet and new communication technologies do not make the First Amendment

invalid, the principles of the Second Amendment apply today, even as firearm technology has advanced.

The truth is that most scientific studies show that news coverage and publicity surrounding school shootings serve to increase their frequency far more than gun availability. As Reason's Robby Soave pointedly asked on Twitter, does this mean that it's time to crack down on the First Amendment? A form of "news control," so to speak. It is reasonable for Americans to be wary of policy proposals that would likely be ineffective, yet would negate our most precious individual rights.