
Guest Column: Can we remain the Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave?

June 10, 2022



Once again, we face the horror of another mass homicide, another school shooting. This time, it was 17 children and two teachers in Ulvalde, Texas, who were massacred by an angry 18-year-old with a gun.

This one person determined to commit a mass homicide crashed his car through the schoolyard fence to gain access to his victims after he had killed his own grandmother.

It is easy for some to blame the gun; it was the final instrument this murderer used to carry out his hateful deed. One more criminal; one more mass shooting; and one more outcry to erode the rights and freedoms of many millions of citizens who lawfully own, possess and are capable of using firearms to protect themselves and their families from exactly this kind of threat.

There is no similar demand to ban automobiles, hand tools, kitchen knives and other instruments that are often used to inflict deadly violence. Guns are targeted because they are designed to stop an imminent threat. Guns can kill from a distance. Cars and kitchen knives serve other purposes and are effective weapons only under close proximity.

Must a victim submit to an attacker? The outcome is predictable when a murderer attacks an unarmed person. Perhaps a teenager, a frail senior citizen, a sick or injured person, or just someone who is distracted

while walking by. The threat, as we are now reminded, is real. The consequences are deadly.

Mass murderers can carry out their crimes because their unarmed victims cannot shoot back. Certainly, adults under whose care the safety of these children depended, would have responded much sooner than the nearly one hour it took for police to take appropriate action. Willing adults can be provided the necessary training.

When properly trained and armed civilians can make all the difference. An armed citizenry would, by the general knowledge of its very existence, serve as a deterrent for all manner of crimes, and would probably stop the more determined criminal dead in his tracks.

Will the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms be watered down to suit those who live in a constant state of fear? An armed citizenry can exclude persons with a history of violence, drug or alcohol abuse, serious mental illness, or those who don't pledge allegiance to the United States. An armed citizenry can provide a buffer of safety that an understaffed, overworked, inexperienced police department can not always be counted on to provide.

We live in an era of decriminalization, early release of inmates following reduced sentences, and accused criminals who are released immediately back into the streets rather than remain locked up while awaiting justice.

We must defend our freedom to keep and bear arms more than ever before.

Because we can't always wait for the police to respond in time, our loved ones may depend upon our ability terminate the threat. Rather than becoming defenseless and fearful, America and Del Norte County must remain the "Land of the Free, and the Home of the Brave."

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