Guns in America

**Not everyone believes the Second Amendment gives Americans “an absolute right to own guns,” said The New York Times. But the Supreme Court has ruled that it does, and some 68 percent of the public agrees – so whatever reforms we make must respect the concerns of “law-abiding, safety-conscious gun owners.” At the same time, gun enthusiasts must recognize that none of the Constitution’s protections are “so absolute that they erase concerns about public safety and welfare.”** ***(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

**The NRA's most absurd argument: No new gun-control law can prevent all future massacres. Of all the arguments against commonsense gun laws made by the National Rifle Association, said Michael Tomasky, that one's clearly "the dumbest." Gun-rights absolutists have been insisting that there's no point in mandatory background checks and bans on assault weapons and large-capacity magazines, since these restrictions couldn't guarantee that Aurora and Newtown would never happen again. Buts what law prevents all lawbreaking.? The Clean Water Act did not end all pollution. Laws against armed robbery don't prevent all robberies. Laws are passed to reduce, not eliminate, acts that society deems objectionable. The fact that it's impossible to design a perfect gun-control law should not serve as an excuse to do nothing when psychos armed like commandos shoot up malls, schools, and movie theaters with horrifying regularity. Gun-rights absolutists write off such massacres as the price for their continued access to killing machines designed for mass slaughter. "The prevention canard" serves as "the least morally objectionable way for them to express that." No one should be deceived. *(The Week magazine, April 26, 2013)***

**Fewer than 10 percent of Americans amass arsenals of five weapons or more. And for all the focus on assault rifles, the make up a small portion of the firearms in private hands: approximately 6 percent of all guns owned. *(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

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**This is America, where our Supreme Court has “upheld an individual right to bear arms.” Sandy Hook was a terrible crime, but let’s remember how the country overreacted to 9/11 with the Patriot Act and other violations of civil liberties. “Few good policies come from rapid responses to deeply felt injuries.” The most effective response would be to let citizens carry weapons in all public places, said John Fund in NationalReview.com. Mass killers always pick “gun-free zones” where people are helpless. Those cowards would be deterred if they knew someone would shoot back.** ***(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

**America needs an intervention: America's death toll from guns should trigger an international outcry, said Henry Porter. Counting suicides, homicides, and accidents, guns kill 32,000 people a year there. If another country were killing its own people at such rates, the U.S. would demand intervention. Yet the Americans seem blind to the problem, even as they clamor for laws to make everything safer -- mandating helmets and seat belts, banning drop-side baby cribs, even outlawing scalding coffee. The pro-gun crowd that controls Congress doesn't recognize the "inconsistencies and historic lunacy of its position." It's as if gun advocates can't do simple math. They tolerate no deaths from terrorism, spending a gobsmacking $649 billion on homeland security and accepting all kinds of restrictions on personal freedoms. But they reject any curb on guns, which have killed 364,000 Americans since 9/11. "When owning a gun is not about ludicrous macho fantasy, it is mostly seen as a matter of personal safety," despite "conclusive evidence that people become less safe as gun ownership rises." Only international pressure can jolt the American public into action. The slaughter "has reached the point where it has ceased to be a domestic issue. The world cannot stand idly by." *(The Week magazine, October 4, 2013)***

**Nearly 40 million firearms background checks were processed in 2020 -- a 40 percent increase over 2019 and by far the most since the FBI began tracking such checks in 1998. Amid fears of political violence and pandemic-related anarchy, an estimated 5 million Americans bought their first gun last year. (*Axios.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 29, 2021)***

**About 100 Americans die on average every day from gun violence. Currently 60 to 100 Ukrainian soldiers are dying daily in the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky recently estimated. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 17, 2022)***

**Since the Newtown, Connecticut, massacre, at least 2,268 Americans have been killed with guns, including 158 children and teenagers. *(Slate.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 8, 2013)***

**The number of Americans killed in all the wars since 1775 is 1.17 million, according to government statistics. The number of Americans killed by firearms, including suicides, since 1968 is 1.38 million. *(The Guardian.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 4, 2013)***

**Americans own about 46 percent of the 857 million civilian-owned firearms in the world, despite making up 4 percent of the world's population, according to a new report from the international Small Arms Survey. The U.S. has more guns than citizens, with an estimated 120.5 guns for every 100 residents. The nation with the second-highest firearm ownership rate, war-torn Yemen, has 52.8 guns per 100 residents. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 6 /July 13, 2018)***

**1.625 million: The number of Americans who have died from gunfire since 1968 -- more than the accumulated American deaths from all wars since the country's founding more than 200 years ago. *(Russ Juskalian, in Discover magazine)***

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**About 16 million Americans – or 1 in 20 adults – own at least one AR-15 assault rifle. Two-thirds of those in existence have been manufactured since the Sandy Hook mass shooting and generated $11 billion in sales. Ten of the 17 deadliest shootings in the country since 2012 have involved AR-15s. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 7, 2023)***

**In the past decade, semiautomatic rifles like the AR-15 have become the weapon of choice for young killers, and I needed to see what America was willing to put into the hands of teenagers in the name of freedom. With the pistols, my shots pulled down from the recoil or the weight. But the AR-15 nestled into my shoulder pad, and the shots skipped out of it and into the center of the target. I felt like I was in Call of Duty, with the same confidence that there would be no consequences for my actions; that if anything went wrong, I could just respawn. Later, a friend texted to ask how firing the rifle had been. “I loved it,” I said. “No one should be allowed to have one.” *(Helen Lewis, in The Atlantic magazine, April, 2023)***

**The primary selling point of the AR-15 is that it can be endlessly modified, configured, reimagined. It can become louder or quieter, easier to carry, wield, fire and reload, or more lethal. A vast assortment of accessories – vests, helmets, straps, and other gear – is unfailingly designated as “tactical.” To the would-be tactician, every place that humans inhabit – housing developments, stores, strip malls, hotels, churches, hospitals and, yes, schools – is another opportunity to imagine oneself taking part in military-style maneuvers. It is hard to see the upside of instilling this paranoid attitude among millions of ordinary Americans. *(Matthew Walther, in The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 14, 2023)***

**The AR-15 was designed for the battlefield, with bullets that create a “blast effect” that “literally tears people apart.” Yet the association with warfare actually “became a selling point for everyday buyers,” and now 1 in 20 American adults owns at least one. “Respect for the Second Amendment doesn’t require standing by while 6-year-olds are torn to shreds.” It’s time for the country to ban the AR-15, and all the rifles like it. *(The Week magazine, April 7, 2023)***

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**As a gun owner myself raised in gun culture in rural Pennsylvania, I’ve been shocked how little many recent gun purchasers know about storing and using deadly firearms safely and responsibly. With no training, most gun owners are “bad shots with bad nerves” who “spray bullets” when frightened. This is how we end up with “trigger-happy gun owners reacting out of panic, vitriol, or racist paranoia. *(The Week magazine, May 5, 2023)***

**Ten Democrat-majority states have laws banning assault weapons, including three approved over the past year in Illinois, Delaware, and Washington state. As a result of mass shootings, “this is now an electorally winning issue,” said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee. *(The Wall Street Journal, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 26, 2023)***

**Gun-control laws can work, said Will Oremus in Slate.com. In Australia, a shooting massacre in 1996 prompted the government to ban the sale of semiautomatic guns, buy back those in circulation, and require gun purchasers to register all weapons under their own names. Gun deaths there dropped 59 percent over the following decade, with not a single mass shooting since.** ***(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

A record number of American babies are being named after guns. In 2012, 955 babies were named Colt, 666 were named Remington, and 118 were named Ruger, after the gun-maker Sturm, Ruger & Co. *(TheDailyBeast.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 7, 2014)*

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**The FBI denied 72,659 attempted gun purchases under the background check system in 2010 – about 1.2 percent of applications. Of those rejected, half had criminal records, and 19 percent were fugitives. *(Politico.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 8, 2013)***

**Nearly 40 million firearms background checks were processed in 2020 – a 40 percent increase over 2019 and by far the most since the FBI began tracking such checks in 1998. Amid fears of political violence and pandemic-related anarchy, an estimated 5 million Americans bought their first gun last year. *(Axios.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, January 29, 2021)***

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**Let’s start with a ban on assault weapons that were designed for one thing – mass slaughter, said The Washington Post. The Bushmaster Lanza used is a version of the M-16 used by the military, “and does not belong in private hands, any more than M-1 Abrams tanks,” hand grenades, or mortars do. Fully automatic weapons, or machine guns, are already banned – with no negative impact on the Second Amendment, said the New York Post. Modern semiautomatic weapons can fire dozens of rounds in seconds, making them just as deadly as the fully automatic, “gangster guns” banned by Congress in 1934. They are not necessary for self-defense or for hunting, and it’s “time to get rid of them.” *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

Bank crimes data from the Federal Bureau of Investigation show that when bank guards are armed with guns, bank robberies are three times as likely to become violent. *(Center for Investigative Reporting, as it appeared in The Week magazine)*

Of the National Rifle Association's 75-person board of directors, 95 percent are white men and 87 percent are male. *(Bloomberg Businessweek, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 29, 2013)*

The .223-caliber Bushmaster semiautomatic assault rifle used in the Newtown, Connecticut, school massacre is the same kind used in the Washington, D.C.-area sniper shootings that killed 10 dead and three injured. Bushmaster once promoted the rifle in a magazine ad that showed their menacing weapon under the words: “Consider your man card reissued.” *(MotherJones.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)*

Why we can’t discuss gun violence: What’s the most forbidden topic in America? asked Timothy Egan. It’s not sex or religion. It’s gun violence. We are “the most armed society in the world,” with more than 300 million guns in private hands, and 9,146 gun homicides in 2009 – a rate nearly 20 times higher than that of other supposedly civilized countries. “But don’t bring that up.” Sports broadcaster Bob Costas learned that lesson last week when he said that Kansas City Chiefs linebacker Jovan Belcher, who murdered his girlfriend and killed himself after an argument, would probably be alive if he hadn’t owned a gun. The gun censors on the Right immediately went ballistic, telling him to “shut up” and demanding his resignation or firing. Why? Because Costas spoke a simple truth. Studies show that a gun in a family’s home is 12 times more likely to result in the death of a household member than of an intruder. It also increases the chance of suicide. For the gun lobby, these facts are “unmentionables,” because they dispel the illusion that guns make you safer. In this country, “the First Amendment doesn’t apply to the Second Amendment.” *(The Week magazine, December 21, 2012)*

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**“Why can’t we regulate guns as a seriously as we do cars?” said Nicholas D. Kristof, also in The New York Times. Guns kill one person every 20 minutes in this country, and yet they are almost free of federal restrictions. To drive a car, however, one must pass written and driving tests, wear seat belts, and follow safety laws. “Can’t we be equally adult about regulating guns?” *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

**Why not treat guns like cars? To drive, you need to take lessons, demonstrate proficiency, get a license, and wear a seat-belt. If we adopted universal background checks for guns and ammo, self-storage laws, and other commonsense reforms, we could cut gun deaths by a third or more. I wonder what might be possible “if only we loved our children as much as our guns.” *(The Week magazine, May 5, 2023)***

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When a 6-year-old Atlanta girl shot herself by accident after finding her father's gun last week, she became the fourth child killed in a gun accident in Georgia in the past six weeks. Nationally, at least 13 children have inadvertently shot themselves this year, and 10 more shot and injured other people. *(Atlanta Journal-Constitution, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 11, 2015)*

In the year since the Newtown massacre, 194 children ages 12 and under have been shot to death in the U.S. At least 52 of those deaths involved a child handling an unsecured gun, and 127 of the children died in their own homes. *(Mother Jones, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 27, 2013)*

Every day, an average of 20 American children go hospitalized for injuries caused by firearms, a new study found. Another 3,000 die every year before they get to the emergency room. For people ages 15 to 19, firearm injuries are the second leading cause of death, behind motor vehicle crashes. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 7, 2014)*

Gun deaths among American children rose 50 percent between 2019 and 2021, from 1,732 to 2,590, according to a report by the Pew Research Center. Gun deaths among all Americans rose 23 percent during that period, reaching 48,830, by far the highest number on record. *(Axios, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 21, 2023)*

About 500 children and teenagers die in U.S. hospitals every year from gunshot wounds, and another 7,500 arrive injured by gunshots – totals that have climbed by more than 60 percent over a decade. Most of these shootings involve handguns. *(NBCNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 8, 2013)*

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Comparison: More people have been killed at American schools this year than have been killed while deployed in the U.S. military. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 1, 2018)*

**Concealed carry: Florida this week became the 26th state to allow concealed carry of a firearm without a permit, after Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis urged the GOP-controlled legislature to go further and allow permit-less open carry. Previously, Floridians needed to pass a background check and complete training courses to carry a concealed gun, and nearly 3 million people in the state have such a permit. Floridians without a permit will still be required to complete a background check and a three-day waiting period to buy a gun from a licensed dealer, but those steps are not required for private transactions. A recent poll found that only 21 percent of Floridians support permit-less concealed carry. *(The Week magazine, April 14, 2023)***

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**When the Founders wrote that a "well-regulated militia" must have the right to bear arms, did they mean every citizen has the right to own an AR-15 capable of killing 50 schoolchildren in a minute? Early in our history, Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison fought bitterly over the meaning of the Constitution they helped draft and ratify. Madison, among other Framers, specifically said that future generations would need to adapt the Constitution's general principles to their own times, "In framing a system which we wish to last for the ages," Madison said, "we should not lose sight of the changes which ages will produce. You might call that an originalist's opinion. (William Falk, in The Week magazine)**

**Gun laws from the age of muskets: Does a man involved in five shooting incidents in six weeks and under indictment for assaulting an ex-girlfriend have a constitutional right to own a gun? asked Ruth Marcus. Sure he does, the uber-conservative Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled last week, in vacating Texas resident Zackey Rahimi’s conviction for illegal gun possession. Rahimi, the court conceded, may not be a “model citizen,” but despite his frequent misuse of guns and domestic abuse, he is “entitled to the Second Amendment’s guarantees.” This is “the insane state of Second Amendment law” in the aftermath of the U.S. Supreme Court’s Bruen ruling last year. In striking down New York state’s licensing standards, the court’s six conservative justices introduced a new, history-based standard – “a straitjacket really” – to determine the constitutionality of any gun law. All restrictions, said the justices, must have some historical analogue in “obscure, Colonial-era statutes.” Thanks to Bruen, right-wing judges in lower courts are invalidating “perfectly sensible gun laws,” including those that ban gun ownership for domestic users, who all too frequently wind up killing their partners with guns. In “the age of muskets,” wife beating was not a crime, so it’s no longer disqualifying. *(The Week magazine, February 17, 2023)***

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The top 15 contenders for the Republican presidential nomination own at least 40 guns among them. Only two GOP hopefuls don't own any firearms: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 10, 2015)*

Sixteen of the 20 deadliest mass shootings in modern history occurred in the past 20 years, with eight of them happening in the past five years, according to Justice Department data. During the 1970s, mass shootings killed an average of 5.7 people per year, rising to 21 people in the 1990s, and 23.5 in the 2000s. The average is now 51 mass-shooting deaths per year. *(Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 20, 2019)*

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Between 2020 and 2022 states with Republican-controlled legislatures had about a 50 percent higher rate of deaths from firearms assaults than states with Democratic-controlled legislatures. They had about a 35 percent higher rate of mass killings. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 26, 2023)*

In the first 200 days of 2017, U.S. gun deaths were up more than 12 percent over last year, with 8,539 people dying of gun wounds (excluding suicides). Firearm injuries were up nearly 8 percent, to 17,043, and the number of children under age 12 shot by a gun increased by 16 percent to 394. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 11, 2017)*

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**“Another week, another shooting,” said Jamelle Bouie in The New York Times. Yet no matter how many children and adults are slaughtered, the Right insists “the debate over gun control is over.” With 400 million guns in America, Republicans say, we should focus on helping mentally ill people before they become mass shooters. That’s rich, given that Texas Gov. Greg Abbott cut more than $200 million from his state’s mental health agency last year. *(The Week magazine, May 19, 2023)***

**Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis wanted to ban firearms from his victory celebration at the Tampa Convention Center last November – but asked Tampa city officials to claim they ordered the ban. In an email, a convention center security official said that because of “political optics,” DeSantis’ aides “want us to say it’s our policy.” Convention center officials denied the request. *(Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 24, 2023)***

**Every year, more than 30,000 people (the equivalent of ten 9/11s) die of gunshot wounds; 55 percent of these are suicides. Another 60,000 are wounded. *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

**The Newtown, Connecticut, school massacre, and the talk of gun control it sparked, has been a boon for gun makers and sellers. Buyers have been gobbling up assault weapons, large-capacity magazines, armor-piercing bullets, and other weaponry out of fear they will be banned. “My shelves are bare,” said Virginia gun-store owner Donel Dover. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 1, 2013)***

**Newtown, Connecticut, is an affluent, family-friendly town with a Main Street straight from Norman Rockwell. Until last week, there had not been a murder there for seven years. Nancy Lanza, divorced and alone, nonetheless felt sufficiently fearful that she bought five guns, including a semiautomatic AR-15 assault rifle designed to mow down scores of people, and practiced shooting at local gun ranges – sometimes, with her disturbed 20-year-old son, Adam. “She was prepared for the worst,” her sister-in-law Marsha Lanza told a reporter. The worst, she said, included the day “when the economy collapses,” the government and police can’t protect you, and only your own firepower will keep you safe. Lanza’s fears are not uncommon in this country, but they did not make her safer. Her son turned her own weapons on her, and then made a killing field of two elementary school classes, rapidly firing hundreds of shots into 20 children and six adults. Once again, at the end of a year scarred by massacres in a movie theater, a Sikh temple, and a mall, our nation is confronted with the consequences of our long, dysfunctional romance with violence and firearms. *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

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**The good news is that suicide is highly preventable. Most suicide attempts are impulsive, an act of depression or panic. If a person survives an attempt, he or she will almost certainly survive the suicidal impulse altogether. A gun in the house massively raises the likelihood that a suicide attempt will end in death. *(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

Of the approximately 11,000 people murdered with guns in the U.S. in 2012, just 322 were killed by an assault weapon or any kind of rifle. The vast majority of killers used handguns. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, September 26, 2014)*

**Just handling a gun can make a man more aggressive, says a new study. Researchers at Illinois’ Knox College tested the saliva of two groups of 15 students after one group was asked to assemble a board game, and another to put together a large handgun. Testosterone levels soared in those who handled the gun, but didn’t change in the board-game group. The two groups were then asked to create a drink containing hot sauce for a student volunteer. Those who’d handled the gun laced the drink with about three times as much mouth-burning sauce as the other group. That, researcher Tim Kasser tells The New York Times, indicates a strong level of aggression. Those men were so primed for conflict, in fact, that many were disappointed when they found out their incendiary concoctions wouldn’t actually be given to the next volunteer. *(The Week magazine, May 26, 2006)***

**Despite reports of surging gun sales, the proportion of U.S. households in which a gun is present has fallen from about 50 percent in the 1970s to 34 percent last year, according to the General Social Survey. The decline in household gun ownership over that period has been most marked among those under 30, where it has dropped from 47 percent to 23 percent. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 22, 2013)***

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Only about 11.5 million Americans hunt in a given year, according to the latest Department of the Interior survey, fewer than the number who attend a professional ballet or modern-dance performance. ***(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

There are about 14 million active hunters in America today, or one out of 18 people. *(TheAtlantic.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)*

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**Last year was a high-water mark for gun violence – more people were shot dead than at any time since the 1990s – though 2021 is shaping up to be even worse. There was one bright spot in 2020. When Americans self-isolated, mass shootings were denied their usual targets. But as America began to return to normal, so did the mass shootings: 45 in the single month between March 16 and April 15. *(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

**Crime in Japan has become so rare that police often have nothing to do. In 2015, there was just one gun homicide. Firearms are virtually illegal there. *(The Economist, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 27, 2017)***

In the past five years, law enforcement officers in Utah have killed 45 people -- more than the number killed by gang members, drug dealers, or child abuse. All the killings have been deemed legally justifiable. *(The Salt Lake City Tribune, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 12, 2014)*

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**Guns were the leading cause of death among Americans younger than 24 last year, according to the CDC. In cities such as St. Louis and Charleston, S.C. pediatricians have begun giving away free gun locks to parents. *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, February 3, 2023)***

**Guns surpassed motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death for kids for the first time in 2020, the most recent year for which CDC data is available. That year, 4,368 Americans 19 and under were killed by guns, two-thirds of them homicide victims. About 30 percent were suicides. *(Axios, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 10, 2022)***

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**Two-thirds of American gun buyers explain that they bought their gun to protect themselves and their families. And here is both the terrible tragedy of America’s gun habit and the best hope to end it. In virtually every way that can be measured, owning a firearm makes the owner, the owner’s family, and the people around them less safe. The hard-core gun owner will never accept this truth. But the 36 percent in the middle – they may be open to it, if they can be helped to perceive it. *(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

**Two days after the school massacre in Uvalde, Texas, we had a 15-minute lockdown at the Los Angeles high school where I’m a teacher. The school administrator sent a text to us saying there was possibly a student with a gun at the school next door. Your heart pounds because there have been 27 school shootings this year. And you see the fear in your students’ eyes. Why does a teacher now have to figure out how to protect and save 30 kids because at any moment a gunman could walk into our school? It is too much. It is too much of a burden on all of us. *(Marisa Crabtree, in the Los Angeles Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 17, 2022)***

**One in 5 Americans has lost a family member to gun violence, and 1 in 6 has witnessed a shooting, according to a new report by the Kaiser Family Foundation. Among Black Americans, 1 in 3 have witnessed a shooting, and 34 percent have had a family member killed by a gun. *(Politico, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 28, 2023)***

American gun makers nearly doubled their annual production of guns between 2009 and 2013, from 5.6 million firearms manufactured to 10.9 million. Although Congress has passed no new gun laws since 2008, the surge in sales was fueled by the belief that President Obama was going to ban all or most guns. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, October 16, 2015)*

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Since a white supremacist killed nine people in an African-American church in Charleston, S.C., on June 17, 2015, mass shootings (when four or more people are killed) have occurred every 47 days on average. Before the 1999 Columbine High School shootings, the pace was roughly once every six months. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 23, 2019)*

**At the time of the Orlando massacre, the U.S. had already experienced 133 mass shootings in 2016, according to the FBI definition of a mass shooting as a single event in which four or more people are shot. It was the 15th mass shooting in Florida this year, and the fourth in Orlando. *(Vox.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 24, 2016)***

**There have been more than 313 mass shootings in 2018 in America -- with mass shootings defined as incidents in which four or more people were shot but not necessarily killed. That's an average of about one mass shooting a day. *(Vox.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 30, 2018)***

**There have been at least 351 mass shootings in the U.S. in the first 334 days of this year, defined as incidents in which four or more people, including the gunman, are killed or injured by gunfire. There were at least 12 in the previous week alone, including the Colorado Springs Planned Parenthood shooting. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 11, 2015)***

**The U.S. has seen more than 600 mass shootings so far this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive. Not a week has passed this year without at least four mass shootings, defined as gun crimes in which four of more people are injured or killed. (The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 2, 2022)**

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Gun-related injuries in the U. S. incur more than $1 billion in annual medical costs, most of it paid by Medicaid and other public-health programs, according to a study by the Government Accounting Office. Gun violence leads to 50,000 emergency room visits and 30,000 hospital stays a year, with many of the victims poor and uninsured. *(Politico.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 30, 2021)*

The amount of gun violence in PG-13 movies has more than tripled since 1985, according to a new study in the journal Pediatrics. In 2012, in fact, there was more such violence in PG-13 films than in R-rated movies. “Violence sells,” said study author Daniel Romer, *(CNN.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 22, 2013)*

**U.S. Rep. Paul Broun (R-Ga.) said last week that “there are more people killed by baseball bats and hammers than are killed with guns.” This is a myth. In 2011, FBI data shows, 8,583 people were murdered with firearms. Only 496 people were killed with baseball bats, hammers, and other objects. *(Slate.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 1, 2013)***

**It’s only natural to seek “a protective salve of public policy” in the wake of such a massacre, said The Wall Street Journal. But let’s not rush into a new round of gun restrictions, which alone do little to prevent widespread acts of terror. Norway’s “tight gun-control and licensing regime” did not deter Anders Breivik from shooting 69 people dead last year.” *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

**Of course we need firearms. You never know when some nut is going to come up to you and say something like, “You’re fired.” You gotta be ready. *(Dave Attell)***

**The other nonsensical solution gun lovers offer is the “fortification of soft targets.” That means turning schools, churches and synagogues, malls, supermarkets, and virtually every public place into garrisons complete with metal detectors, reinforced doors, and armed guards. Is that “freedom”? Every time Texas Gov. Greg Abbott is forced to comment on the latest mass shooting in his state, said Michael Tomasky in The New Republic, you have to wonder: What goes on “in the mind and conscience of a man who presides over such carnage and does nothing?” *(The Week magazine, May 19, 2023)***

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The NRA’s profit motive: Whom does the NRA really speak for?” asked Jordan Weissmann. Yes, the National Rifle Association represents 4 million gun owners – “the deer hunters, and self-defense-minded 2nd Amendment devotees who would kindly like the government to keep its hands off their Glocks and Ar-15s.” But in a very direct way, the NRA also represents Bushmaster, Browning, Smith & Wesson, and the rest of the gun industry. Gun-makers have donated at least $39 million to the NRA in recent years, and have become deeply enmeshed with the organization’s revenues through special gun-purchase deals and ads in its publication. As a result, the NRA adamantly opposes virtually all restrictions on gun sales – even ones that NRA members support, “such as requiring background checks at gun shows and banning sales to people on the terrorist watch list.” Gun-makers can no longer depend on a shrinking pool of hunters; they need to sell arsenals of powerful weaponry to hard-core gun devotees preparing to fight a tyrannical government. So when the NRA speaks, it’s these extremists and their suppliers who are talking, not “your average Joe Six-Shooter.” *(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)*

In the first eight months of 2021, the NRA spent just $13,900 on School Shield, the program it launched to promote school safety after the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut. Last year the gun rights group had revenues of $282 million. *(Popular Info, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 17, 2022)*

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**When guns are objects of idolatry: American gun culture is no longer focused on the right to defend yourself, said David French. Instead, it has devolved into belligerent and grotesque “gun idolatry.” My wife and I are gun owners and supporters of the Second Amendment, but the “gun fetish” that dominates our politics bears little resemblance to the gun culture that I grew up with, which emphasized the grave responsibilities of firearm ownership. Today, pandering politicians flippantly pose with AR-15s and fire weapons in campaign ads, and label themselves “pro-life, pro-God, and pro-gun.” A disturbing number of gun owners have adopted a “black gun” or “tactical” lifestyle, dressing in camo and tactical gear and brandishing the weapons they love wherever they go. At certain protests, “it’s now common to see men and women armed to the teeth,” deliberately displaying assault rifles to make their political opponents feel a “palpable, physical fear of armed violence.” There are still millions of responsible gun owners in this country, but “the idolatrous fringe is fringe no longer.” These gun rights absolutists “bear arms with religious intensity,” and their increasingly overt threat to use their weapons against anyone who disagrees could “destabilize our democracy.” *(The Week magazine, June 17, 2022)***

Americans own nearly 300 million firearms, a new national study found. This translates to nearly nine guns for 10 people, a per capita ownership rate nearly 50 percent higher than any other country's. *(Slate.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, July 5-12, 2013)*

When the coronavirus pandemic struck last year, people throughout the developed world raced to buy toilet paper, bottled water, yeast for baking bread, and other basic necessities. Americans also stocked up on guns. They bought more than 23 million firearms in 2020, up 65 percent from 2019. First-time gun purchases were notably high. The surge has not abated in 2021. In January, Americans bought 4.3 million guns, a monthly record. ***(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

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Law enforcement officials in Texas cities say a law allowing adults to carry handguns without a license has led to more spontaneous shootings during arguments over driving, parking spots, loud music, and love triangles. “I seems like now there’s been a tipping point where just everybody is armed,” said Harris County Sheriff Ed Gonzales. As of January, half the nation’s states will allow “permit-less carry.” *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 11, 2022)*

Since 2007, there have been at least 29 mass shootings in the U.S. committed by someone legally permitted to carry a concealed weapon. *(WashingtonPost.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 6, 2015)*

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Police officers who serve in states with high gun ownership rates, like Alabama, Alaska, and Mississippi, are three times more likely to be killed on the job than cops who serve in states with low gun ownership rates, like Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York, according to a study by the University of Illinois. In states with strong background-check systems, there are 48 percent fewer cops killed with handguns. *(NBCNews.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, August 28, 2015)*

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Poll watch: 72% of Americans say that mass shootings could be prevented “if we really tried,” but 44% of Republicans say ‘we have to accept” them “as part of a free society.” 72% of Democrats say banning assault weapons would “do a lot.” 60% of Republicans say the answer is better mental health screenings. *(CBSNews/YouGov, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 17, 2022)*

Poll watch: 81% of registered voters support raising the legal age to buy a gun to 21, and 77% support a 30-day waiting period for all gun purchases. 61% favor a ban on semiautomatic assault weapons. *(Fox News, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 12, 2023)*

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Pre-pandemic, about -30 percent of American adults owned a gun, according to a Pew Research Center survey. Another 33 percent rejected the idea of gun ownership. The remainder, about 36 percent, did not happen to own a gun at the time they were asked the question – but had either owned a gun in the past or could imagine owning a gun in the future. In 2020, the future came, and millions of them queued at gun shops, pandemic stimulus dollars in hand.***(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

**President Biden this week renewed his call for Congress to ban assault weapons in the wake of a school shooting in Nashville that killed six people, including three 9-year-olds. “As a nation, we owe these families more than our prayers,” Biden said. “We owe them action.” *(The Week magazine, April 7, 2023)***

Twenty-five hundred years ago, the Greek writer Thucydides described the progress of civilization. It began, he said, when the Athenians ceased carrying arms inside their city, and left that savage custom to the barbarians. It’s long past time for Americans to absorb this first lesson from the first democracy.***(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

Proof that gun control can work: For more than 80 years, the U.S. actually had "a tough and effective gun control law that most Americans have never heard of." The National Firearms Act (NFA), passed in 1934 in response to a wave of gangster violence, "imposes precisely the kinds of practical -- and constitutional -- limits on gun ownership, such as registration and background checks, that the NRA regularly insists will lead to the demise of the Second Amendment." The law mandates the registration of machine guns, sawed-off shotguns, silencers, hand grenades, and other weapons designed for murder and mass casualties. To purchase such a weapon, you must pass an FBI background check, pay a $200 tax, and have your mug shot and fingerprints and the serial number of the weapon entered into a national database. The law has been extremely effective: The 4 million registered weapons are almost never implicated in crimes. The NRA has proven that if all firearm purchasers -- particularly those buying semiautomatic assault weapons designed for military use -- had to register their weapons, it would screen out bad guys. Gun crime would plummet, without abrogating the rights of "law-abiding gun owners." *(The Week magazine, June 10, 2016)*

A quiet gun-law revolution: Even with gun violence spiking, said Adam Winkler, right-wing federal judges “are waging an unprecedented attack on U.S. gun-safety laws.” These Trump-appointed judges have been empowered by a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last June that struck down New York’s handgun licensing requirements and “established a new test for courts to apply in all 2nd Amendment cases”: Equivalent laws had to be on the books in the 18th and 19th centuries. This “originalist” extremism has enabled federal judges to strike down state laws banning the erasure of serial numbers on guns, gun purchases by convicted felons and domestic abusers, and banning guns in churches, hospitals, bars, airports, and buses. Even when 200-year-old precedents exist, right-wing judges “have twisted themselves in knots” to deny it. Texas’ 19th-century ban on guns in “educational, literary, and scientific institutions,” a federal judge ruled, didn’t count, because other states didn’t have similar laws. “Many of the most important and effective gun laws we have” are without historic precedent, because the world has changed: There were no airports in 1800, for example. Most Americans want stricter gun-safety laws, “but a different kind of gun revolution is already underway.” *(The Week magazine, April 14, 2023)*

**Yet it’s only in a land saturated with military-style weaponry that “a garden-variety neighborhood dispute” can end in carnage, said Eugene Robinson in The Washington Post. In countries with “reasonable laws about firearms,” an argument between neighbors might cause at worst a fistfight. We used to have such laws – for example, from 1994 to 2004, when assault-style rifles were banned – and “huge majorities of Americans” want those restrictions restored. How much more “needless killing” must we endure? *(The Week magazine, May 12, 2023)***

Republican candidates have this year produced more than 100 TV ads that feature candidates shooting, brandishing, or lauding guns. Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey pulled “a little Smith & Wesson” from her purse and aimed it; Jake Bequette, an Arkansas U.S. Senate candidate, said he believes in “babies, borders, bullets”; and Ohio House candidate J. R. Majewski displayed a rifle, said “I’m willing to do whatever it takes to return this country back to its former glory,” and pulled the trigger. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 10, 2022)*

Many conservative states are loosening gun laws even as shootings soar. Today, only eight states require safety training to buy a gun or get a concealed-carry permit, and almost 40 percent of owners have no training at all. *(The Week magazine, May 5, 2023)*

Research shows a gun in the home is far more likely to be used in a murder or suicide than in self-defense. *(The Week magazine, May 5, 2023)*

Sandy Hook: In Connecticut, families this year won a “precedent-shattering $73 million settlement from Remington for advertising the XM-15 semiautomatic rifle with language targeting “insecure and unstable young men” like the Newtown killer.***(The Week magazine, December 30, 2022 / January 6, 2023)***

There are ways, of course, to make it at least marginally more difficult for the criminally minded, for the dangerously mentally ill, and for the suicidal to buy guns and ammunition. But these gun-control efforts, while noble, would only have a modest impact on the rate of gun violence in America. Why? Because it’s too late. There are an estimated 280 million to 300 million guns in private hands in America. This level of gun saturation has occurred not because the anti-gun lobby has been consistently outflanked by its adversaries in the National Rifle Association, though it has been. Like many effective groups, (the NRA) is powerful in good part because so many Americans are predisposed to agree with its basic message.” *(Jeffrey Goldberg, in The Atlantic, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 21, 2012)*

At least 70 percent of school shootings are committed with guns found at home, so establishing the precedent “that secure gun storage is part of being a responsible gun owner” could compel parents to lock up their weapons and save many, many lives. *(The Week magazine, December 17, 2021)*

The Transportation Security Administration found 29 guns at security checkpoints across the U.S. in the week before the shooting at Los Angeles International. All but two were loaded. In 2012, airport screeners found more than 1,500 guns. *(NationalJournal.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 15, 2013)*

The FBI issued a record 11,500 seizure orders for guns bought by people who later flunked background checks in 2020 and 2021. A huge surge in gun-buying during the pandemic created long delays in background checks, and under tha law, licensed dealers can go ahead with weapons sales if the checks are not completedwithin three days. *(USA Today, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 17, 2023)*

When so many people are armed, “senseless violence” is inevitable. It’s a vicious cycle: “The very gun violence created by lax gun laws and mass gun ownership fuels the kind of fearfulness that leads to gun ownership.” To change that, we need to “challenge the misperception that” guns in homes make people safer, said Nicholas Kristof in The New York Times. Research shows a gun in the home is far more likely to be used in a murder or suicide than in self-defense. *(The Week magazine, May 5, 2023)*

Since the Columbine High massacre in 1999, more than 311,000 children at 331 schools have been exposed to gun violence within their schools. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, June 10, 2022)*

So far in 2023 there have been 22 mass killings that inflicted 115 deaths, the highest number of deaths at this point in the year since the Associated Press began tracking such data in 2008. *(Associated Press, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 19, 2023)*

**The White house announced the formation of a special task force headed by Vice President Joe Biden to formulate the specific policies that might prevent future mass shootings. Obama said he wanted legislation submitted to Congress within a month, saying it should include a renewal of the federal ban on assault rifles like the AR-15, which expired in 2004; a ban on large-capacity ammunition clips that allow 30 to 100 rapid-fire shots without reloading; and closure of a loophole allowing unlicensed buyers to purchase weapons at gun shows. Some Republicans said they’d resist such legislation, but several Democrats with a record of strong support of gun rights, including West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, said the Connecticut massacre had “changed America.” He pledged support for “commonsense” legislation to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, and to do “whatever I can do to protect children.”** ***(The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)***

**States that have adopted stand-your-ground laws have had a 58 percent higher gun homicide rate over the past two years than states that did not adopt them. These laws remove the duty to try to retreat from a threat before using deadly force. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, May 12, 2023)***

**Since the Newtown shootings, five states have passed seven laws strengthening gun control. Ten have passed 17 laws extending gun rights, including laws that authorize guns in churches, teachers to be armed, and employees to bring guns to workplaces as long as they store them in their cars. *(The New York Times, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 26, 2013)***

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White Americans are five times more likely to commit suicide with a gun than to be shot by someone else. But for each African-American who uses a gun to take his or her own life, five others are shot to death by other people. *(The Washington Posts, as it appeared in The Week magazine, April 5, 2013)*

**What we do know about gun violence in the U.S., from a purely statistical perspective, may surprise you. Mass shootings make headlines and dominate public discourse, but roughly 60 percent of firearm deaths in 2017 were suicides -- that's 23,854 people who took their own lives with a gun. *(Russ Juskalian, in Discover magazine)***

**Half of the almost 48,000 suicides committed in 2019 were carried out by gun. All of this slaughter is enabled by the most permissive gun laws in the developed world.Above all else, guns are used for suicide. In any given year, twice as many Americans die by suicide as by homicide. Suicide is the second-leading cause of death among teenagers and young adults, behind only accidents. *(David Frum, in The Atlantic)***

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**Texas’s gun laws are among the most permissive of any state’s. Not surprisingly, Texas had more mass shootings than any other state last year, and has had more than a dozen so far in 2023, including one just a week earlier. But Texas Gov. Greg Abbott once again insisted “the root cause” of so many mass shootings is “the mental health issue,” not guns. *(The Week magazine, May 19, 2023)***

**Let’s get the truth about guns: Does owning a gun make you safer? said David Frum? The gun lobby does not want you to know. All the available data strongly indicates that a gun is far more likely to be used to kill a family member, in a suicide, or in an accidental shooting, than it is in defense against criminals. Gun makers and advocates challenge this data, just as the tobacco lobby once claimed there was no proof that smoking caused cancer. But under a law pushed by the gun lobby, Congress has forbidden the use of federal research dollars to study gun safety. Why? The answer is obvious. What we do know is that more than 15,000 people are shot each year in accidents, with more than 600 of these wounds proving fatal. That’s more than all the people killed or injured in fires or plane crashes. Another 19,000 use guns to kill themselves. If any other product had this kind of safety record, “we’d have a national uproar.” President Obama should direct the surgeon general to conduct an extensive study of gun safety, like the tobacco studies of the 1960s. Let’s find out “what guns really do to those who carry them.” *(The Week magazine, March 8, 2013)***

The U.S. has the highest rate of gun ownership in the world – an average of 88.8 guns per 100 people. War-torn Yemen, the second highest, has 54.8 guns for every 100 residents, while Iraq has 34.2 guns per 100 residents. *(The Washington Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, December 28, 2012 – January 4, 2013)*

Since the 2021 school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, prompted calls for new gun restrictions, Republican-led states have rolled back background checks, eliminated permitting requirements, nd expanded where guns can be carried, including on college campuses. Currently, 25 states require no permits or training to carry a handgun, up from 16 in 2020. *(The New York Times, as it aqppeared in The Week magazine, April 14, 2023)*

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So many Walmart shoppers drew their own handguns when a shooter opened fire at a Colorado store last week, police said they had difficulty identifying the suspect on surveillance footage. It took Thornton, Colorado, police more than five hours to identify the suspect charged with killing three people. No one else fired. *(The Denver Post, as it appeared in The Week magazine, November 17, 2017)*

Gun control: Walmart takes a stand: Walmart just put Washington's response to gun violence to shame, saied Patricia Murphy in RollCall.com. With lawmakers "missing in action," the nation's largest retailer is taking concrete steps to protect the public in the aftermath of last month's horrifying mass shooting at its El Paso, Texas, store. The company announced that it will stop selling ammunition for handguns and assault-style rifles. Walmart had already taken assault-style weapons and handguns off the shelves, and now will sell only long-barreled rifles and shotguns, which are mostly used for hunting. Walmart is also asking customers not to openly carry firearms in its stores, even in states where it's legal to do so. CEO Doug McMillon called on Congress to pass "commonsense" gun legislation, and at least debate banning assault weapons. If only Congress or the White House would show this kind of leadership. (*The Week magazine, September 20, 2019)*

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We lose eight children and teenagers to gun violence every day. If a mysterious virus suddenly started killing eight of our children every day, America would mobilize teams of doctors and public health officials. But not with gun violence. *(Elizabeth Warren, U.S. Senator, in A Fighting Chance)*

**What drives mass shooters to kill: “America’s epidemic of mass shootings” can’t be blamed on mental illness, said Mark Follman. Politicians and pundits who want to downplay the role of guns and white supremacist ideology are again trying to explain away the Buffalo supermarket massacre by depicting 18-year-old Payton Gendron as a “crazed monster.” Gendron allegedly murdered 10 people after he stockpiled weapons, “detailed his ideological hatred of Black people and others, and surveilled intended targets.” It was no spur-of-the-moment attack by a person suffering from delusions. For the past 10 years, “I’ve studied scores of mass shootings,” and in most cases, “mass shooters don’t just suddenly break – they decide.” Their violent ideas arise from “entrenched grievances, rage, and despair,” and their subsequent attacks are often the result of a “highly organized and methodical process.” Gendron admitted he radicalized himself in online, far-right forums promoting “replacement theory.” Of course, “no person who commits mass shootings is, in a basic sense, mentally healthy.” But most have clear motivations, including a desire for vengeance and lasting infamy. “Making mental illness the bogeyman” is just a way of pretending that nothing can be done. *(The Week magazine, June 3, 2022)***

American women account for 84 percent of all women killed with firearms in the developed world, even though they make up only one third of the developed world's female population. *(TheAtlantic.com, as it appeared in The Week magazine, March 7, 2014)*

Republicans’ fear-mongering about “woke mobs,” antifa, and “crime-ridden hellscapes” has stoked so much panic that 60 million guns have been sold since 2020; there are now an estimated 450 million guns in a country of 330 million people. As a direct result, “the leading cause of death to people under 18 years old in America is guns,” and our young people are “more threatened than a threat.” *(The Week magazine, May 5, 2023)*

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