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Uvalde Gunman Exposes America

FRESNO—The Fresno County Democratic Party mourns the many lives tragically cut short by the gunman in Uvalde. There is nothing to be said that could lessen the suffering of those left behind.

The Uvalde gunman joins the unnamed multitude of other murderers who have ended lives with the twitch of a finger. There is no excuse for our country's behavior, allowing such repeated atrocities to pass by without any change by our national regime.

Uvalde stands ready to join Sandy Hook as monstrous monuments to the inaction of American legislators and their fear of "making tragedies political."

When we sat down to list the shootings with which to compare this incident, the list quickly grew too long to print. The names of cities and locations, numbers of dead, dates grouped into the dozens by year—they all blurred together.

Conservatives try to paint the U.S. gun death epidemic as a tragically intractable problem. Their goal is to convince voters that no proposed reform could ever provide any relief, as if we face a magical curse rather than a regime of ill-considered law.

This is the conservative strategy, just as it is with climate change and other broad-scale threats, and wherever they find broad public support for change they instead cast the population into hopelessness policy-specific diversions. The focus-shifting has already begun, from vaguely defined mental health problems without solutions to saying that there were too few guns in the school.

The simple fact is gun control works. The Uvalde gunman waited until he was 18 and the legal barriers against him elapsed before buying his semiautomatic gun and high-capacity ammunition magazines.

Fifteen years ago, California suffered under a rate of gun deaths almost as high as those of other big states such as Texas and Florida. But after passing a new round of slightly more restrictive regulations California has seen a 10% reduction in those deaths, against the national trend, whereas Texas and Florida have experienced 28% and 37% spikes, respectively.

After Australia experienced its first gun-led slaughter on school grounds, the country passed sweeping hindrances against private gun ownership. In the decades since, it has enjoyed a dividend of living children.

Australia is another individualistic anglophone nation built on land expansion through ethnic cleansing—not too different from our own nature. Where we differ is that they chose to value a right to life over a right to convenient homicide.

This cannot just be a state-level issue. All legislation has limits and when people can still access guns, deaths will still rise. The city of Chicago has found its gun control radius to be far too small, and Mexico continually suffers under a stream of U.S.-purchased guns flowing over the border.

As American voters, we must support and advocate for gun control legislation that would hinder one's ability to obtain high-capacity magazines, semiautomatic weapons or handguns.

We cannot allow ourselves to be bound in a suicide pact by a constitutional amendment from the 1700s for which conservative judges have convinced us to ignore the first half.

"A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Why do we defend ancient militias after we have transferred their responsibility of protecting our statehood to the standing military we have since created?

Why do we allow "well regulated" to mean no background checks, semiautomatic homicide tools, and open or concealed weapon carrying that would not be allowed in the Wild West of Tombstone?

Why do we allow our children to be killed over and over?

Why do we refuse to stop it?

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