



Americans Against Gun Violence
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“Pious condolences will no longer suffice”

A Message from the President of Americans Against Gun Violence
June 11, 2017

On the eve of the first anniversary of the horrific Pulse nightclub mass shooting in Orlando, Florida, the words of a U.S. Senator from Connecticut ring true:

“Pious condolences will no longer suffice....Quarter measures and half measures will no longer suffice....The time has now come that we must enact stringent gun control legislation comparable to the legislation in force in virtually every civilized country in the world.”

The problem with this statement, however, is that it was made almost 50 years ago, by the late Senator Thomas Dodd, following the assassinations of Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy in 1968.¹ As I write this message in 2017, the United States still doesn't have gun control laws that come even close to being as stringent as the laws that have long been in place in every other high income democratic country of the world.² As a result:

- The United States has by far the highest per capita gun ownership rate of any developed country.³
- We're the only developed country in which horrific mass shootings continue to occur on a regular basis.⁴
- Children in our country are killed by guns at a rate that is 12 times higher than in other developed countries.⁵
- Our overall rate of gun deaths is 10 times higher than the average rate in other developed countries.⁶
- Since 1968, more U.S. civilians have died of gunshot wounds than all the U.S. soldiers killed in all the wars in which our country has ever been involved.⁷

There is currently only one national organization in the United States that openly advocates the adoption of stringent gun control legislation comparable to the legislation in force in every other high income democratic country of the world. That organization is Americans Against Gun Violence. If Senator Dodd's statement resonates with you, please join Americans Against Gun Violence, if you haven't done so already, and please make an additional donation if you're able.

Vigils are planned across the country to recognize the one year anniversary of the Pulse nightclub mass shooting. These vigils typically include a minute of silence. Brief periods of silence may be appropriate to pay respect to the victims of mass shootings, but as Senator Thomas Dodd implied in 1968, these kinds of remembrances won't stop gun violence.

On the first anniversary of the worst mass shooting to date in U.S. history, please take a moment to think not only of the victims of the horrific massacre that occurred at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, Florida on June 12, 2016, but also to think of the more than 90 people who are killed by guns on an average day in our country. If you feel it is appropriate, then by all means, observe a minute of silence. But don't remain silent. Please join Americans Against Gun Violence in raising a collective voice to demand of our elected officials that they enact definitive gun control laws – laws comparable to the stringent gun control legislation that has long been in place in every other high income democratic country of the world – to stop the shameful epidemic of gun violence that afflicts our country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill".

Bill Durston, M.D.
President, Americans Against Gun Violence

References

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- ¹ Thomas Dodd, "Text of Speech by Senator Thomas Dodd on Floor of U.S. Senate: The Sickness of Violence and the Need for Gun Control Legislation" (Office of Senator Thomas Dodd, June 11, 1968), http://thedoddcenter.uconn.edu/asc/research/gun_control.htm#; Thomas Dodd, "Press Release: Pious Condolences Will No Longer Suffice" (Office of Senator Thomas Dodd, June 10, 1968), http://thedoddcenter.uconn.edu/asc/research/gun_control.htm#.
- ² "Guns in the United States — Firearms, Gun Law and Gun Control," *GunPolicy.org*, accessed June 12, 2017, <http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/region/united-states>.
- ³ "Compare the United States – Rate of Civilian Firearm Possession per 100 Population," *GunPolicy.org*, accessed September 19, 2016, http://www.gunpolicy.org/firearms/compare/194/rate_of_civilian_firearm_possession/10,280,31.
- ⁴ Adam Lankford, "Public Mass Shooters and Firearms: A Cross-National Study of 171 Countries," *Violence and Victims; New York* 31, no. 2 (2016): 187–99, doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1891/0886-6708.VV-D-15-00093>.
- ⁵ "Rates of Homicide, Suicide, and Firearm-Related Death among Children - 26 Industrialized Countries," *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 46, no. 5 (February 7, 1997): 101–5.
- ⁶ Erin G. Richardson and David Hemenway, "Homicide, Suicide, and Unintentional Firearm Fatality: Comparing the United States with Other High Income Countries," *The Journal of Trauma, Injury, Infection, and Critical Care* 70, no. 1 (January 2011): 238–43.
- ⁷ Louis Jacobson, "More Americans Killed by Guns since 1968 than in All U.S. Wars, Columnist Nicholas Kristof Writes," *@politifact*, August 27, 2015, <http://www.politifact.com/punditfact/statements/2015/aug/27/nicholas-kristof/more-americans-killed-guns-1968-all-wars-says-colu/>.