



Americans Against Gun Violence
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Press Release

Americans Against Gun Violence Responds to Parkland, Florida High School Mass Shooting

Sacramento, California, February 15, 2018: Americans Against Gun Violence extends heartfelt sympathy to the families, friends, classmates, and colleagues of all the students and staff who were mortally wounded during the mass shooting yesterday at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. We also extend our heartfelt sympathy and sincere wishes for a speedy and complete recovery to all the other victims of the shooting.

The United States is the only high income democratic country in the world in which mass shootings, including shootings on school campuses, occur on a regular basis.¹ There is no mystery as to why regular mass shootings are a uniquely American phenomenon. The reason is what the late Senator Thomas Dodd (D-Connecticut) described in 1968 as "the ridiculous ease" with which almost anyone in our country can get almost any kind of gun.² And there's no mystery as to what we need to do to stop mass shootings, including school shootings, along with the extraordinarily high rate of daily gun violence in our country. To again quote Senator Dodd from 1968, "The time has come that we must adopt stringent gun control legislation comparable to the legislation in force in virtually every civilized country in the world." Unfortunately, our country has not enacted the stringent gun control regulations that Senator Dodd called for in 1968, and since 1968, more US civilians have died of gunshot wounds than all the US soldiers killed in all the wars in which our country has ever been involved.³

The main cause of the epidemic of gun violence in our country - the extraordinarily high number of guns in circulation and the associated ease with which almost anyone may acquire a gun - and the obvious steps necessary to stop the epidemic - the adoption of stringent gun control laws comparable to the laws in all other high income democratic countries - are rarely mentioned in coverage of high profile shootings.

It is the position of Americans Against Gun Violence that the United States should adopt stringent gun control laws comparable to the laws that have long been in effect in all other high income democratic countries. Such laws include stringent regulations, if not complete bans, on civilian ownership of handguns and all automatic and semi-automatic rifles. Such laws need not prevent responsible hunters and target shooters from practicing their sports with traditional sporting rifles and shotguns. In order to stringently regulate or ban handguns, the Supreme Court's radical reinterpretation of the Second Amendment in the 2008 *Heller* decision must be overturned.

¹ Max Fisher and Josh Keller, "What Explains U.S. Mass Shootings? International Comparisons Suggest an Answer," *The New York Times*, November 7, 2017, sec. Americas,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/11/07/world/americas/mass-shootings-us-international.html>.

² 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#.

³ 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/>.