



Americans Against Gun Violence
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2018 National High School Essay Contest \$1,000 Winner

(Name withheld at student's request)

The blaring of the fire alarm rings in our ears as we shuffle down the stairs in confusion. Why are there two fire drills today, and is that fireworks we hear in the distance? We bustle through the crowd and we are still fine, until we get frantic texts from our friends and family asking if we are alive. It is then that the news reaches us, and the fear for our lives comes upon us. An active shooter is at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

Who would have thought it would be our school hidden away in Parkland, a town once rated one of the safest places to live in the United States. I try not to cry, but the frightfulness of the situation hits me when my best friend texts me, "I almost died - there was so much blood." It is then that I lose any semblance of calm as we sprint out of the school.

When we are finally in safety, we think it is over; however, this nightmare has just begun. It is not until the next day that we find out which teachers, coaches, classmates, and friends will never again walk the halls of our school. Our community and hearts are broken for the seventeen, and we have no clue what to do except be the voice for those who can no longer speak. We fight because just as the late Senator Thomas Dodd once said, "The time has now come that we must adopt stringent gun control legislation comparable to the legislation in force in virtually every civilized country in the world." It was true when he proclaimed it in 1968, and it is equally if not more true now. Gun violence still plagues our country from school shootings like ours and Sandy Hook, to the Las Vegas concert, to everyday situations in cities like Chicago. One would think that the obvious solution is more gun control. It feels like the United States has regulations in almost all walks of life, from the drinking age to driving, while guns are virtually unregulated. It seems like anyone can get a gun, and while it may seem like common sense that this should not be the case, it is still the reality.

Our generation will not stop speaking out against gun violence, and we will continue to persuade our legislators to take a stance similar to that of Senator Dodd. If they fail to do this, they leave us with only one choice. We must take it upon ourselves to vote out politicians that will not take any real

action. We must take it upon ourselves to vote out those who say, “thoughts and prayers” instead of “policy and change.” And we must take it upon ourselves to vote out the people who value money from the NRA more than the lives of innocent people. Senator Dodd was right. The time is now and we will no longer be complacent with the current gun laws.