

# The Delray Democrat

## Looking Down the Barrel – the Peril of Gun Safety Compromise<sup>1</sup>

*Robert Resnick*

Our country has been long overdue in passing essential gun safety legislation. Columbine was an early warning that was ignored. After the atrocity of Sandy Hook it seemed we would surely address rising gun violence. Yet Congress continued to do nothing, intimidated by the NRA. And if we thought the Parkland murders would be the final straw, we were again wrong, notwithstanding the heroism and activism of the Parkland students,

Instead, there has been an increase in mass shootings across the country in schools, places of worship, stores, movies, concerts, and other facets of everyday life. Hundreds of innocent people have been senselessly and mercilessly slaughtered. While there appears to be a mental health issue (normal people don't commit mass murder, right?), writing off these massacres on that basis simply defies logic and necessity. Improved background checks may have hindered access to these weapons in some cases, but not in all. More importantly, in almost every case, the assailant used a military assault style weapon with high capacity magazines.

The NRA and Republicans face polls showing an all-time high approval for gun safety legislation. Most Americans, including NRA members, support improving the background check system. That appears to be a limited area of safe space for the President and Congressional Republicans to support legislation with minimal risk to their electoral base. Trump and Republican leaders might be poised to agree to such an effort. This is not nearly enough and anyone who cares to stop the scourge of gun violence across the country should not support this excuse for a response. Most Americans, including Republican voters, also support a ban on military assault weapons and high capacity magazines. These measures must be included with improved background checks in any gun safety legislation or the legislation should fail.

Passing legislation that only addresses background checks will not solve the gun violence crisis. However, it would allow the President and Congressional Republicans to claim they took action. Such minimal progress is hardly heroic, even if in defiance of the NRA. More importantly, it fails to address the more significant aspect of the crisis. Any viable, impactful solution must include a ban on military assault weapons and high capacity magazines, and such a ban is favored by a majority of Americans.

As a veteran, I can safely attest to the fact there is no legitimate need to possess these weapons aside from war. Banning them will have the greatest impact in reducing mass shootings and the resultant carnage. Democrats, along with Republicans who support gun safety, need to stand fast and reject the easy way out and demand a real solution. Keep fighting to ban military assault weapons – nothing less will work. Our lives, our children's lives, depend on it.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Delray Democrat*, p. 7.

