

Eagle Forum Report

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Disarming is NOT the Solution

GUNS AND POSERS

by Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), who gave this speech at the National Rifle Association's Annual Meeting in Houston, Texas, on May 27th, 2022.

We're gathered today in Texas under crushing darkness. On Tuesday, less than 300 miles away, an evil man murdered 19 children and two teachers.

I sat down with law enforcement and with local officials in Uvalde. I joined in a community prayer vigil that evening as the entire community was reeling from the shooting. We prayed together and we cried together, mourning the unspeakable losses that have shaken the Uvalde community and that have gripped our entire nation.

There are no words to describe a monster who enters a school and murders little children. Nineteen little kids. Nineteen families in Uvalde who lost their little boys and their little girls. Two families of teachers who aren't here with us anymore.

None of us will ever truly understand the manifest evil that devastated Uvalde on that day. The entire state, the entire country is horrified and grieving. It is an evil that has happened too many damn times.

In the last several years especially, Texas has repeatedly seen the face of evil. Repeatedly, I've been on the ground after these tragedies.

I was in Dallas in 2016, in Sutherland Springs in 2017, in Santa Fe in

2018, in El Paso and Midland-Odessa in 2019. And now Uvalde. Each time was the very picture of horror.

If children are the picture of innocence, then the lunatics and the monsters like this one, the one who would deliberately murder children, they are the picture of evil.

Many of us in this room are mothers and fathers. What happened in Uvalde is the ultimate nightmare for every parent.

The anguish of those families right now is unimaginable. All of us in Texas need to come together and comfort those families right now. We need to love them, embrace them, and take care of them.

Having visited communities over and over again struck by the darkest evil, there's another consistent pattern that I've seen.

Repeatedly, despite the darkness, I've seen love and compassion and heroism and strength in these communities. You see heroes, men and women from all walks of life, of every color and creed, pastors and lay people coming together and standing as one.

Our state's response to each act of evil, to each challenge, has always been one of unity and strength and resilience.

Uvalde is strong. Texas is strong, and the entire country stands alongside the men and women who are grieving in Uvalde today. We will get through this and we will come through this together.

At the same time, it is incumbent on us to understand what is behind these evil attacks.

When we were growing up, this kind of thing didn't happen. Kids may have worried about getting into a fistfight at school, maybe a bloody nose at recess but we never worried about a psychopath coming into our classrooms to commit murder.

The elites who dominate our culture tell us that firearms lie at the root of the problem. By elites, I refer to some of the most powerful politicians and their allies in the media, the leaders of the largest corporations and many of the most famous celebrities and those who echo and amplify them. Their resources are limitless, their megaphone is enormous, and their voice can be deafening. Many of these same people make their accusations from behind great bulwarks of safety. From gated communities equipped with private security or at the very least, from safe and expensive neighborhoods protected by high home prices and low crime rates. Such people can afford an indulgent ideology that ignores reality.

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As is so often the case, those furthest from the halls of power are the most dependent on the ability to defend themselves. For millions of Americans the right to keep and bear arms is not theoretical, it's not abstract. For a single mom in a dangerous neighborhood, it is a matter of basic security. Taking guns away from these responsible Americans will not make them safer, nor will it make our nation more secure.

In an age where elites embrace defunding the police, when homelessness runs rampant, when gangs dominate entire communities, and when radical district attorneys refuse to prosecute violent crime in cities across America, rarely has the Second Amendment been more necessary to secure the rights of our fellow citizens.

Many would tell us that the evil on display in Uvalde or in Buffalo derives from the presence of guns in the hands of ordinary American citizens. It's far easier to slander one's political adversaries and to demand that responsible citizens forfeit their constitutional rights than it is to examine the cultural sickness giving birth to unspeakable acts of evil.

It's far less comfortable to ask why despair and isolation and violent hatred is so prevalent in America. It requires a sick soul to drive a truck into a crowded sidewalk, to plant a bomb at a marathon, or to fly a plane into a building. It requires a sick soul to open fire in a movie theater or in a church or in a school.

A speeding automobile in the hands of a madman is deadly, as is a jet airplane. Tragedies like the events of this week are a mirror, forcing us to ask hard questions, demanding that we see where our culture is failing: Looking at broken families, absent fathers, declining church attendance, social media bullying, violent online content, desensitizing the act of mur-

der in video games, chronic isolation, prescription drug and opioid abuse and their collective effects on the psyche of young Americans is both complicated and multifaceted.

It's a lot easier to moralize about guns and to shriek about those you disagree with politically.

It is not about guns. We know that places with some of the most restrictive gun laws, places like Chicago and Baltimore and Washington, D.C. — they don't have less gun violence. Indeed, they contain some of the most dangerous communities on the face of the earth.

We also know that there are communities in places like Texas with extraordinarily high rates of gun ownership, and extraordinarily low rates of gun violence. We know that keeping guns away from citizens who follow the law does very little to keep them away from criminals who ignore the law.

In 1972, the percentage of households owning guns in the United States was 43%. In 2021, the rate was 42%. The rate of gun ownership has not changed. And yet acts of evil like we saw this week are on the rise.

Do we have to ask ourselves why?

The press will tell us these horrific crimes occur only in America. That simply is not true.

The data show, according to the Crime Prevention Research Center, "Out of the 101 countries where we have identified mass public shootings occurring, the United States ranks 66th in the per capita frequency of these attacks and 56th in the murder rate."

To be clear, one is one too many. We know that many of these who seek to commit the most heinous crimes — they are isolated from human contact, they are living a virtual life in the absence of community and faith and love. None of that excuses

their heinous acts, none of that reduces the evil of their deeds. But these are questions we have to answer if we want to rescue our country.

I ask these cultural questions because mere technocratic solutions, the acts of legislators or of government regulators will not alone solve what ails us.

Those who proclaim that it will are not telling you the truth. They are demagoguing for political gain.

Now, some may be naive enough to confuse their virtue signaling with real solutions. But most are engaged in the most cynical kind of politics. They say, as President Obama did this week, "It is long past time for action, any kind of action." Do something, they demand.

Perhaps to the surprise of some, I emphatically agree. There have been too damn many of these killings, and we must act decisively to stop them. But what is the something we should do? To Washington Democrats, the answer is so-called universal background checks and banning so-called assault rifles. The more aggressive Democrats call for banning all firearms.

Their so-called solutions would not have stopped these mass murderers, and they know this. The Uvalde shooter — I won't use his name and nor should anyone else, he should fade into eternal anonymity — passed a background check.

As for so-called assault rifles, which the left in the media love to demonize, these guns were banned for 10 years, from 1994 to 2004. And the Department of Justice examined the effect of the ban and concluded that it had zero statistically significant effect on violent crime.

So why is it that so many politicians advocate policies that they know will not work, that will not stop

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these horrific crimes? The answer for too many of them is that their real goal is disarming America.

They point gleefully to other countries that have disarmed their citizens, while overlooking the rise in crime and sexual assaults that have repeatedly followed. If they succeeded, these horrific crimes would not end. Gun bans do not work. Look at Chicago. If they worked, Chicago would not be the murder center that it has been for far too long.

The reason is simple, the law-abiding citizens follow the law; but the criminals do not. That is why they are criminals. Let me tell you what would happen if they succeeded in confiscating guns: Many more people would lose their lives.

Here's a statistic from the Obama White House, hardly a right-wing source. Guns are used defensively



to stop a crime between 500,000 and one million times every

single year. That means if the left disarms America, those crimes would no longer be stopped. Many more single moms in subways would be assaulted or raped or murdered. Home invasions would turn much more deadly as only the criminals would have guns. And far more children would be murdered.

So does that mean we're help-

less? That there's nothing we can do to stop these crimes? Absolutely not.

Let's focus on what works: stopping the bad guys, imprisoning violent criminals, and protecting our vulnerable.

In 2013, I introduced legislation called Grassley-Cruz. It was designed to take the guns out of the hands of felons and fugitives and those with serious mental illness.

Grassley-Cruz did three things. First, it would mandate that the Department of Justice conduct an audit of federal agencies to make sure that all felony convictions have been reported to the database.

Second, Grassley-Cruz would create a gun Crime Task Force at the Department of Justice specifically to prosecute felons or fugitives who tried to buy firearms illegally. In 2010, there were 48,000 felons and fugitives who tried to illegally buy guns. The Obama Department of Justice prosecuted only 44 of them. That is indefensible.

Third, Grassley-Cruz would have authorized \$300 million for school safety improvement grants to harden our schools. When Grassley-Cruz came to the Senate floor for a vote in 2013, 52 senators voted yes, including nine Democrats. It was the most bipartisan piece of comprehensive legislation before the Senate. So why didn't Grassley-Cruz pass into law if a majority of the Senate voted for it? Because Harry Reid and Chuck Schumer filibustered it.

If you want to talk about policy proposals that could have stopped at least some of these mass murders, Grassley-Cruz is a perfect example.

Take Sutherland Springs. There, it was already illegal for the shooter to purchase firearms, doubly so because he was a felon, and because he had a domestic violence conviction.

So how did he get his guns? Be-

cause the Obama Air Force failed to report his felony conviction to the database and so he passed the background check.

If Grassley-Cruz had passed, if the Democrats hadn't filibustered, then the Department of Justice audit would have presumably caught his felony conviction. And the gun crimes task force would have prosecuted him for the felony of lying on the background check form. That would have meant that that monster would have been sitting in a federal prison instead of murdering 26 innocent people in that beautiful sanctuary.

Has any reporter asked even a single Democrat why they filibustered bipartisan gun violence legislation that could have made a real difference saving lives?

So what about Uvalde? Well, part of Grassley-Cruz was \$300 million dollars to upgrade school security.

We also know that there are best practices at federal buildings and courthouses, where for security reasons they limit the means of entry to one entrance. Schools likewise should have a single point of entry. Fire exits should only open out.

At that single point of entry, we should have multiple armed police officers or if need be military veterans trained to provide security and keep our children safe.

Maddeningly, the shooter in Uvalde walked through an unlocked back door into an open classroom. We need serious funding to upgrade our schools, to install bulletproof doors, and locking classroom doors, and to hire law enforcement to protect our most precious asset — our children.

Senate Democrats cynically blocked school safety funding in Grassley-Cruz and they have repeatedly blocked my legislation to allow

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schools to access \$1.3 billion in federal funds to improve school safety.

Had Uvalde gotten a grant to upgrade school security, they might have made changes that could have stopped the shooter and killed him at the single point of entrance with our law enforcement there on the ground before he hurt any of these innocent kids and teachers.

Ultimately, as we all know what stops armed bad guys is armed good guys.

Like Stephen Willeford, the heroic plumber and NRA rifle instructor who grabbed his AR-15 and ran barefoot to stop the murder at Sutherland Springs. Or the Border Patrol tactical unit who finally killed the Uvalde monster.

The media's cynicism and dishonesty on this topic is so pernicious. The media blames you, the millions of members of the NRA for these crimes. That is a lie!

Nobody here has committed these kinds of unspeakable crimes. Everybody here is horrified, utterly horrified by these mass murders.

But more importantly, it is the law-abiding patriots here like Stephen Willeford, who over and over and over again step up and risk their lives to stop these depraved lunatics.

The media wanted all of us to stay away. But you are not the cause of this evil.

Instead, you are fighting to defend the Bill of Rights, to keep people safer in their homes and on the

subway, to protect our families. You are the veterans, the law enforcement members, the courageous men and women who rise to defend your fellow neighbors.

We must not react to evil and tragedy by abandoning the Constitution or infringing on the rights of our law-abiding citizens.

Now is not the time to yield to panic or intimidation or fear. Now is not the time for lies, it is not the time for empty political gestures.

Now is the time for unity. Now is the time for love. Now is the time for action to protect our rights, to stop those with evil in their hearts, and to do everything humanly possible to protect our children and to protect our families. 🦅

IT'S DRUGS, NOT GUNS

By Lee Spiller, Executive Director, Citizens Commission on Human Rights-Texas.

A 26-year-old was arrested for allegedly attempting to murder U.S. Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. The *Dallas Morning News* reports that during his 10-minute initial court appearance, the defendant, stated that he was on "medication", but he didn't say which medication he was on or why.

This comes on the heels of the Robb Elementary School tragedy in Uvalde, Texas where an 18-year-old killed 19 students and two teachers. While the gunman's mother and the head of the Texas Department of Public Safety say he had no psychiatric history, a "fact free" public policy debate has begun while key information remains unexamined. Toxicology results have not been returned. A toxicology report is sorely needed in all cases of mass violence.

It is time to question what could have triggered the mindset of the alleged killer, an issue that needs responding to if we are to truly face

preventing more tragedies and provide grieving families and the nation with answers.

Mainstream media quotes experts saying that such individuals are "mentally disturbed," or have "untreated mental illness," but that doesn't explain the level of violence we are seeing.

A review of scientific literature published in *Ethical Human Psychology and Psychiatry* regarding the "astounding rate" of mental illness over the past 50 years revealed that it's not "mental illness" linked to increased acts of violence, but the psychiatric drugs prescribed to treat it.

Mandatory toxicology tests should be required in each deadly incident to determine any prescription or illicit drug use, especially as today, many psychotropic drugs can be purchased from rogue online pharmacies. Prescription stimulants have become drugs of abuse.

As policy makers forward mental

health care as a "solution" to mass violence, they miss the point that many of the perpetrators have been under psychiatric care, the mainstay of which is mind-altering psychotropic drugs. Proponents of such drug-ging state that not all cases of mass violence are correlated to psychiatric drugs, but that's just the point. It's often neither confirmed nor denied, as law enforcement isn't required to investigate and publicly report on the use of these drugs in cases of mass violence.

Growing numbers of families are also concerned about behavioral or mental health programs in schools and other settings, and whether these are adversely influencing the minds of their children. A broader discussion of these issues can be found in a publication from the Citizens Commission on Human Rights International: www.cchrint.org/pdfs/violence-report.pdf. 🦅

