

Gun Rights

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So in wake of this most recent school shooting, I've been seeing a lot of people on both sides of the fence (gun rights) go back and forth. I was also just asked about my opinion on it, so I might as well voice it for what it's worth. I've heard a lot of points made by both sides, and can see some validity on both sides.

I'll start by mentioning what I understand from the perspective of those that want to protect the rights of gun owners. School shootings are a little unique in the way we as a country react to them. For those that want to protect those rights, I understand their anger when they point out that when a drunk driver kills someone on the road, we don't blame the car manufacturer. We're furious at that driver for putting others in harm's way selfishly. Like so many cases, we go to gun control and gloss over the fact that this 19 year old kid (and so many other shooters) have had some form of psychological issues, deep racist or sexist beliefs, or many other red flags that unfortunately, always seem to surface after the fact. I understand why gun owners want that security to be able to own firearms, especially for scenarios such as home defense. I've also seen people point out that mass shootings have skyrocketed just in the last few decades. Of course, there are legitimate uses for firearms besides just home security. Hunting and sporting competitions are a couple of those, and I can understand the frustration of those hobbies potentially being affected by stricter gun laws. There's also merit in that making guns illegal wouldn't stop bad people from getting them. It could likely result in thousands of small underground black markets showing up across the country, where people get them through illegal means.

However, I can also see validity in the other side wanting those stricter laws. The process of purchasing a gun in most states is pretty damn easy. So in a state such as Florida, this kid was able to buy the AR-15 rifle and ammunition without many obstacles whatsoever. I can understand why this group wonders why it's even possible to own a semi-automatic rifle, a weapon that we keep seeing is capable of maiming or killing a lot of people in a short time span. What is also questionable is that there are legal methods to help increase the rate of fire of a rifle such as the AR-15, and these don't truly make it an automatic weapon, thus fitting into a loophole. The fact that mass shootings have skyrocketed in these last 30 years does raise a huge red flag in itself that

there is a problem. I can understand the anger about the ease with which a weapon such as this one, can be purchased depending on the state in which you live. There is much to be said about making it tougher (hopefully) for people like this kid to purchase weapons and stockpile ammo. After all, few things on Earth can hurt or kill people like guns can. This automatically makes it a discussion that needs to take place. While in its simplest form, the 2nd Amendment protects the right to carry and bear arms, when the amendment was written, no one could've conceived guns that could fire that many rounds per minute.

So after looking at both sides and thinking about it extensively, I think I would fall somewhere in the middle, maybe leaning towards this latter group. While it would inconvenience those that truly have no malicious intent, I'm of the opinion that owning a firearm needs to have more responsibility forced upon it. In short, it should be a pain in the ass. Men and women that are required to carry arms, such as law enforcement and those in the military, cannot do so without extensive training. This is not only technical training on those weapons, but also rules of engagement and how to think in situations where it might be necessary to use it. For a civilian, you don't have to get any kind of training. I think it should be mandatory to get training (from professionals) and certain tests should have to be passed. I also think that psychological, medical and criminal checks need to be routinely made and enforced with a zero tolerance policy. I don't even think it would be a bad idea to have a polygraph test, where you answer questions about the reason to own that gun. Looking it up, FOIA cards in Illinois need to be renewed every 10 years. I think at most, you should need to pass tests and get that "checkup" every year, so you could in effect, be monitored closely to make sure you're still responsible enough. If something comes up, you simply suspend, or if bad enough, revoke their license to carry/own firearms. It's a discussion for another day, but I don't really see why a civilian should or would need to own an AR-15 rifle anyway.

So as is often the case, both sides have good points. I personally lean closer towards significantly stricter gun laws, but as a country we do focus so much attention on the weapon, and sometimes overlook the person that was using it. This is the opinion of someone that really doesn't like talking politically at all, as I think it can often bring out the nastier side of people. I'm not looking at this as a Republican or a Democrat, just as someone that thinks this country needs to look at this a little closer, and ask some questions.

