

It's time for politicians to tighten gun laws

Sam Huddleston

In 1999, 13 people were killed at the Columbine High School shooting. When that tragedy occurred, people all over America were horrified and vowed to find a solution to such needless violence.

Now, nearly 20 years later, many have just accepted that mass shootings have become an ever-present aspect of American life.

How could this be? Over the course of the past two decades, in spite of the best efforts of countless protests and movements, how could things still be so bad?

At the heart of all of these movements, people are asking lawmakers to pass new legislation to help quell gun violence, a stance which has become increasingly popular among Americans. According to a recent NPR poll, 75 percent of Americans believe that the country should have stricter gun laws in place.

So, being as there is a general consensus among Americans, and being as there is no shortage of citizens voicing these concerns to their elected officials, it stands to reason that the fault lies in legislators who are vehemently unwilling to join their constituents in recognizing that the one common factor in all gun violence is guns.

A favorite strategy of conservative politicians and media personalities following a mass shooting is an urge to not “politicize” the tragedy by discussing it in legislative terms.

Following the 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas, in which 58 people were killed by a lone gunman, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said, “It’s particularly inappropriate to politicize an event like this. Entirely premature to be discussing legislative solutions if any.” By saying so, he deftly avoided pressure to pass legislation.

However, this strategy can only work for so long. After a while, lawmakers have to start offering solutions, and of recent, the solutions put forward by many lawmakers are so blatantly impractical that they border on offensive.



SamHuddleston/REBELLIONSTAFF

The remedies proposed range from arming teachers to increasing armed security in public places, but they all fall back on the tired adage, “The only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.”

It is a widely held belief among Republican lawmakers that as the number of guns in the hands of law abiding citizens is directly proportional to the safety of the American populous. This, however, is almost the complete opposite of the truth.

According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

the United States, while only having 4.4 percent of the world’s population, has 42 percent of all civilian owned guns, making America the most gun saturated country on the planet. At the same time, the U.S. has close to 30 homicides (for every 1 million citizens), which is another chart topping statistic on the global stage.

The correlation is hard to avoid, but many in Washington have their eyes shut tight and their ears plugged up.

They stick to their “fight fire with fire” position, which is really all that they have left, being as they

have completely removed from their minds the possibility that perhaps the best way to stop a “bad guy” with a gun is to prevent him from getting a gun in the first place.

They of course have done so in order to line their pockets with money from various special interest groups, the most egregious example being the National Rifle Association (NRA).

Over the past two decades, according to a recent Politifact study, the NRA has spent around \$200 million in political affairs (e.g. campaign contributions and lobbying).

Assuming that the average American voter doesn’t realize that their safety has been bought and sold by their elected officials, or even worse, if they don’t care, it’s very unlikely any meaningful change will ever come about.

However, legislative incompetency is perpetuated by people whose positions are entirely temporary. Over the next four years, nearly every student in this school will become eligible to vote, and when November rolls around, students should make their voices heard and fire anyone who doesn’t put their safety first.

Celebrating women doesn't take anything from men



REBEL
RAMBLINGS

Kaitlyn
Vanway

From Joan of Arc to Beyoncé to Malala, women are awesome. And though this is on my mind every single day of the year, the rest of the world designates March 8 as International Women’s Day, a holiday created by the United Nations in 1975 to focus on women’s rights.

But this March 8, Google reported that the most searched term worldwide was not awesome ladies like Rosa Parks, Frida Kahlo, or Clara Barton; it was “International Men’s Day,” a search leading to a pool of articles and Yahoo Answers chains inquiring about the lack of a holiday celebrating and focusing on men.

There is no International Men’s Day for the same reason there is no White History Month; we do not need to schedule time out of our year to celebrate something so ingrained in our culture.

That is not to say that men do not face challenges; from racism to poverty to homophobia, men across the world face a whole slew of problems. However, the majority of their challenges do not arise from the fact that they are men.

They have never been prohibited from voting because they are men. Though African American and non-landowning men were barred from voting, that was never a result of their sex.

Women, however, were kept from electing their leaders until just under a hundred years ago simply because they were born female.

Men have never been barred from schools because they are men. All-male schools date back to Ancient Greece, whereas in the modern day, over 130 million girls still lack access to education due to poverty,

stigma, pregnancy, child marriages, and the basic fact that they are female.

They have never faced the sheer rates of domestic and sexual violence that women do; in fact, according to the New York Times, one out of every four women will experience some kind of sexual assault—be it anything from unwanted touching to rape—during their time at college.

These women’s movements—suffrage in the 1910s, the feminist movement in the 1970s, and the modern day International Women’s Day and Women’s March movement—are not focused on men. They are not about hating men or blaming men or excusing men or ignoring men.

These movements are completely focused on women—on all women have accomplished and all they have left to accomplish.

By equating International Women’s Day and the feminist movement to sexism, the entire point of the day is missed.

International Women’s Day is focused on the ladies in our history: the ladies who were so often discriminated against and ignored and excluded and underestimated.

International Women’s Day is one day a year where we schedule time out of our lives to let these women, both of past and present, know that we see them and we appreciate them.

Of course we can and should celebrate women every day. But just as with marches and walkouts, there is power in everyone doing it at the same time.

By having a day where men and women across the world are focused on the same thing, we promote awareness and change for issues women face daily simply because they are women; there is power in numbers.

Men have accomplished incredible feats, but no one ever says that they do so in spite of their Y chromosome. Men are half the population, and there is no ignoring that.

But in a country that has had 45 presidents yet not one of them female, it seems that if we don’t actively think about issues plaguing women, then they will be forgotten.

Feminism is defined by Merriam-Webster as “the belief that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities.” Anyone who is advocating for women’s superiority or “man-hating” is not a feminist.

International Women’s Day is for all the feminists—male and female alike—that see the disparity and can’t stand it anymore.

It’s for all the feminists who take issue with gender norms and wage gaps and the silencing of women’s voices.

Because men and women are awesome—but sometimes the world needs a little extra reminding about women’s sheer awesomeness.

International Women’s Day means equality, celebration, and empowerment, but most of all, it means progress.