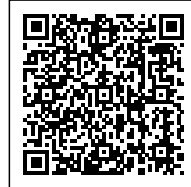




OPINION: GET READY FOR ANOTHER CYNICAL, USELESS, GUN-CONTROL PUSH BY DEMOCRATS - CREATORS

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The first question any reasonable person asks after a horrible crime is, "What could have been done to stop it?" Yet after every mass shooting, gun controllers suggest unworkable, unconstitutional, completely ineffectual ideas that target people who will never commit a crime.

After the twin mass shootings in California last week, Gov. Gavin Newsom (flanked by armed guards) told CBS News more federal gun-control laws were needed because the Second Amendment is "becoming a suicide pact." What he didn't mention was that California has passed not only every law Senate Democrats are proposing in Washington but a slew of others. Anti-gun group Giffords gives California an "A" rating for having the "strongest gun safety laws in the nation and has been a trailblazer for gun safety reform for the past 30 years."

California already has "universal" background checks. It has a 10-day waiting period limit for handgun purchases, a microstamping system, a personal safety test, the ability to sue gun manufacturers even if they haven't broken any law, an age hike on the purchase of certain firearms including rifles from 18 to 21, "red flag" laws that allow police to confiscate guns without due process, a ban on magazines that hold more than 10 rounds, among many other restrictions. Short of letting cops smash down the doors of peaceful gun owners, California has a law for it. And all it's done is leave its citizens defenseless.

The day of the Monterey Park shooting, President Joe Biden again called on Congress to pass a federal "assault weapons" ban. So-called assault weapons have been banned in California since 1989. Last year, the state passed another bill making them super-duper illegal: SB 1327. From 1989 until today, gun trends in California mirror those of the nation at large. Which is unsurprising. The Assault Weapons Ban of 1994, despite Biden constantly claiming otherwise, did nothing to alter gun violence trends. Homicide rates began to ebb nationally before the ban was instituted. When the ban expired in 2004, and the AR-15 became the most popular rifle in the country, gun violence continued to precipitously fall -- by 2014, gun homicides were the same as they were in 1963 -- until the appearance of COVID.

Then again, the shooter at Monterey Park didn't use an assault weapon. He used a Cobray M11 9mm semi-automatic gun -- "one of the most useless handguns in existence" -- which some reporters referred to as an "assault pistol." It's a scary looking, if antiquated gun (out of production since 1990) that, in this iteration, fires one cartridge with a single trigger squeeze like almost every other gun owned by

civilians -- including AR-15s. The gun was already illegal in California. As is carrying any gun into a no-gun zone. As is murder.

After the killers of Monterey Park (72 years old) and Half Moon Bay (66) struck, Biden, naturally, called on Congress to pass legislation to raise the minimum purchase age for "assault weapons" to 21. Many mass shooters are young men, but the average age of mass shooters is 32. The number of ARs used in the commission of murder in the hands of a person under 21 is a fraction of 1%.

All mass shooters obtain guns illegally, or legally before having any criminal record (or because of a mistake by the police, as was the case in Charleston and elsewhere). Most incidents are perpetrated by young men who have exhibited serious antisocial behavior. In many, if not most, cases, the shooter is already on the cops' radar because he has threatened others, as was the case from the Parkland shooter to the Highland Park shooter to the Half Moon Bay shooter and many, many others. In a study of mass shootings from 2008 to 2017, the Secret Service found that "100 percent of perpetrators showed concerning behaviors, and in 77 percent of shootings, at least one person -- most often a peer -- knew about their plan." The best thing we can do is uphold laws that already exist.

None of this is to argue that simply because some people ignore laws, they are unnecessary or useless. It's to argue that laws that almost exclusively target innocent people from practicing a constitutional right, and do nothing to stop criminals, are unnecessary and useless. The central problem in this debate is that Democrats believe civilian gun ownership itself is a plague on the nation, so it doesn't really matter to them what gun is being banned or what law is being passed, as long as something is being "done."

The other side believes that being able to protect themselves, their families, their property and their community from criminality -- and, should it descend into tyranny, the government -- is a societal good. They see gun bans as autocratic and unconstitutional, and, also, largely unfeasible. And they're right.

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