

EVERY PROBLEM IS NOT A GUN

By David Morse

To a hammer every problem looks like a nail. To an anti-gun zealot every problem looks like a gun.

Mass murders at schools are horrible and need to be addressed. Those who hate guns instantly lay out their tired assortment of anti-gun measures, preying upon our emotions to insist we must adopt them instantly, completely and without thought.

Quick and unconsidered passage is required simply because any sensible review of the measures reveals they are indeed tried and true. They have all been tried before and truly do not work. Most prominent of the measures touted are “assault weapon” and “high capacity magazine” bans and the “universal” background check.

Between 1994 and 2004 Federal law banned manufacture and sale of “assault weapons” and “high capacity” magazines for private ownership. Many U.S. citizens did not even notice. Neither did the crime rate. In 2004, as the ban was about to expire, the Department of Justice’s National Institute of Justice reported: “The ban’s effects on gun violence are likely to be small at best and perhaps too small for reliable measurement.” In other words, while in effect, this ban had no discernible effect on gun crime. Indeed, the firearms homicide rate in 1993 was 7.0 per 100,000 citizens. In 2016 that same rate was 3.8 per 100,000. The firearms homicide rate dropped almost 50% from the level it was before a much touted ban on nasty “assault weapons” and deadly “high-capacity” magazines. Problem is (for the gun-ban types) the low occurred 12 years after the ban went away.

If “assault weapons” and “high-capacity” magazines are to blame for crimes, why did the homicide rate not skyrocket after the ban was lifted? Crime rates were unaffected during a “gun ban” and actually dropped after the ban was lifted. Why repeat this failed strategy?

“Universal” background checks on gun purchases. Nevada enacted a “universal” background check on all gun sales in January 2017. Did this stop Steven Paddock in October 2017? California has required “universal” background checks for decades--did this prevent the San Bernardino shootings? Actually San Bernardino, Salinas and Oakland are among 25 cities with the highest murder rates in the U.S. Illinois prohibits private firearms sales without a state issued permit--does this stop murders in Chicago? Washington D.C. requires universal background checks, yet has the eleventh highest murder rate in the country. Connecticut enacted strict universal background checks following Sandy Hook, Hartford has the eighth highest murder rate in the union. Baltimore, MD has the second highest murder rate among cities in the United States, despite Maryland’s requirement for universal background checks on handgun sales.

Gun control advocates tout statistics regarding “lower” crime rates for states requiring universal background checks. How does this explain London, England having a higher murder rate than New York City in February and March of this year? There are no legal private sales of firearms in England. Handguns are prohibited. Shotgun and rifle permits are issued by the police after meticulous checks. Despite this, illegal guns are available and “...there has been a big spike in both gun crime and knife crime across London,” says London Parliamentarian David Lammy.

Do universal background checks lower crime rates? Didn’t work in Hartford, Chicago, Baltimore, San Bernardino, Salinas, Oakland, Washington, D.C. or London, England.

What causes one human being to harm another is a very complicated matter. Attempting to deal with the issue effectively will involve far more than passing a few more laws on guns. Bullying, suicides, drug abuse, low school graduation rates, intrusive social media, peer pressure, lack of moral guidance and a myriad of other factors are part of the equation. These issues fuel anti-social behavior which rarely, but all too frequently, leads to deadly acts.

No gun law will prevent a determined, sick individual from finding a means to kill another person. Society must think smarter to deal with these difficulties.

The saddest aspect is that anti-gun zealots refuse to look for any other solution or consider any approach other than gun control. They actually impede and distract legislators, law enforcement and the public in general from thoughtful dialog and meaningful discussion of the issues.

Please bear this in mind the next time a group marches to “demand” more gun laws or a television talking head blames gun owners for criminal acts. How do laws aimed at restricting guns in the hands of honest gun owners stop a determined individual from planning a killing? How does punishing a law abiding person who owns a gun similar to that used in a crime solve criminal acts?

Would issuing speeding tickets to non-speeding drivers on freeways in Arizona on grounds they were driving the same type of car as speeders in Florida in any way lead to fewer speeding tickets?

If a certain "type" of car is involved in a very high incidence of speeding violations, does this justify banning manufacture of that type vehicle? How about taking them away from owners who never drove over the speed limit? And how would banning one type of vehicle prevent a speeder from just driving a different type vehicle? Sound stupid--welcome to the world of gun control logic.

A hammer, seeing every problem as if it were a nail, might shatter a glass pane just to clear dirt from the surface. Not caring the glass itself is destroyed and sharp shards will fall into eyes below. Ignoring the fact that wiping with a cloth is far more effective and causes no collateral damage.

An anti-gun zealot, seeing guns as the problem, uses injuries and deaths as an excuse to scream for more gun laws. They scream without demonstrating how their measures would have prevented the terrible crimes, and ignoring the fact that historically guns laws have not been effective. They refuse to consider other actions and even impede thoughtful discussion. They do not care that honest citizens will be adversely effected.

If gun laws in were truly effective in preventing violent persons from committing terrible crimes, the safest places to be would be those places having the greatest number of laws prohibiting guns. Such as schools.

Need I say more?