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Edward Marcus: Guns, guts and politics



JAE C. HONG — ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO Investigators work Monday at the site of a mass shooting at the Inland Regional Center in San Bernardino, Calif.

By Edward Marcus

The horrific events in San Bernadino make all of us think about what kind of country we live in. How can these events that seem to follow one after another possibly be avoided? Is this going to be the new norm for America that every week or two there's another shooting and the attention devoted to it is equal to the number of people killed or wounded? This is not the America that I grew up in nor should it be the one that our children and grandchildren are being brought up in.

I don't pretend to have all the answers or an absolute solution to the problem; however, it seems to me that common sense would dictate that any type of gun, whether a pistol, a short gun, a rifle or so-called long gun, should be subject to licensing.

I understand the rights set forth under the Second Amendment to bear arms, but I firmly believe that right is subject to the right of government to keep, through the licensing procedure, a record of everyone who has an operable weapon of any kind. Just as you cannot scream fire in a crowded theater, as Supreme Court Justice Holmes wrote

in decision relative to the right to free speech quite some time ago, the right to bear arms must also be subject to regulation.

Requiring every person who owns an operable weapon to obtain a license to own a weapon is really no more of an inconvenience than expecting hunters to obtain a license. Licensing takes nothing away but it does give government the opportunity to have a better understanding of those who hold arms in this country.

I fully understand that this proposal will meet with substantial opposition from the National Rifle Association and supporters of its philosophy.

This is a time for people in politics to have enough guts to stand firm and do the right thing for America. We've had enough Columbines, Virginia Techs, Sandy Hooks, and now San Bernardino to last a lifetime. Simply saying how horrific the event is and expressing sympathy for the victims does nothing toward preventing the next disaster.

Unfortunately, there are guns out there and there are people who, for various reasons including just notoriety, will opt to use them in an evil, horrific way. The only way that this can ever be stopped is to have uniform national licensing laws that have teeth in them, where background checks are not perfunctory, but real in nature. It takes people in elected office to have the guts, the fortitude, and the willingness to stand up and take the heat and do the right thing for America.

I believe that all of us have had enough of our elected officials saying they are sorry, talking about the power of prayer, and offering some general comments and then moving on to the next unrelated issue on their radar. This is the time to get something done. This is the time to require mandatory licensing for ownership of any operable weapon. This will give us a database and the chance that, maybe, through the licensing procedure, we can prevent another disaster. It is time for our elected officials to stand up and be counted and do more than just talk about the problem.

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