

Dear legislators,

There are many facts and statistics that defend both sides of the gun control issue. We can use other countries as examples and we can use crime rates of cities, states and countries. And no matter how thoroughly researched the statistics are, people have an emotional reaction to this issue that almost always overrides any well founded study.

Fear has increased tremendously because of the high profile incidents of mass killings of people caught unaware. Killers have taken lives in churches, schools, hospitals, government buildings, the site of a marathon, the Twin Towers and even a part of a military base where soldiers were known to be unarmed. These killings highlight the fact that any of us, and any of our loved ones, are vulnerable when caught with our guard down against another person who desires to do harm.

You and I know that evildoers don't care about the laws. After all, murder is against the law, and they are choosing to ignore the law from the moment they plan to harm people. However, it is clear for everyone that just having access to a deadly weapon doesn't turn someone into a killer.

I had the privilege to come legally to the United States of America and become an American citizen. I came from a country where I personally witnessed extreme violence. I saw crimes and even had the chance to talk to criminals, as part of legal cases I worked in as a Law student in the University of Lima, Peru. Trying to determine causation and intent, I came to the conclusion that simply having a weapon did not make a person a murderer. His/her life choices did. And mostly, what took this person to make that choice. It is more important to understand and legislate the red flags a person displays in their behavior in order to prevent criminal conduct.

It is unjust and inconsistent to conclude that I will murder someone because I have a gun or access to a gun.

It has been vastly proven that our government is not able to protect me against people who want to kill. And I don't blame the government, because there is only one person to blame here: The man or woman who chose to kill.

The lack of understanding makes it easy to develop rhetoric and legislation that will calm the fears of people who don't understand a given subject, but that doesn't really improve our safety, it only makes it worse.

In this country, we give freedom and take it away once you prove to be unworthy of the freedom given to you. Let me put some clear examples: If you are a driver prone to drinking and driving, should we only allow you to drive an ultracompact car? Not an SUV which could kill more people? No, we take away the drunk driver's access to legally drive any car. And how about for the rest of us? Are we going to take away the right to have a car due to the fear that one might be a drunk driven one day? This is about freedom to do as you like until you prove incapable of showing good moral judgment.

Another example, Does every man commit rape? Would we take away the freedom of all men by castration because some cannot handle what they have? No, we allow freedom until an individual chooses to take something that others use for good and use it to do harm to another.

Understandably, we want a solution to ensure that we and our loved ones will never be in the situation of being caught unaware by someone who chose to do evil. Mass killers have targeted churches, businesses, movie theaters, schools and hospitals, but they could as easily take their violence to a place where people are armed. Yet they do not.

I truly hope this country remains the nation I so much dreamed and worked hard to come to years ago. The United States of America cannot become a fear-ridden country focused on restrictions, but rather must remain the land of the free and home of the brave.

Thank you,

Gabriela Osborne

(Written based on Taya Kyle's Gun control won't protect us commentary)