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OPINION

Mr. President: Ban Assault Rifles Now

President Biden and other lawmakers must acknowledge our gun-related public health crisis and ban weapons like the AR-15.

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There are 393 million civilian-owned firearms in the U.S. and only 6.06 million are properly registered.

Gun violence is unequivocally and resoundingly a public health crisis. On July 14, a 20-year-old [shot former president Donald Trump](#) with an AR-15 registered to his father. If the Secret Service had not taken him out immediately following the Trump shooting, he was poised to continue injuring a large crowd of people in addition to the one person he killed and two he hurt.

This tragic event has become all too common over the past 20 years with cases like the Charlottesville mass shooting, Parkland High shooting, Robb Elementary School shooting, and many more.

Every year, children, elderly, and the most vulnerable in our population are lost due to senseless acts of violence. Crimes that could easily be prevented and avoided if the country implemented stronger licensing laws.

Public health is defined as, “the science of prolonging life and promoting health through the organized efforts and informed choices of society, organizations, public and private, communities and individuals.” Gun violence is a clear violation of every American citizen’s most basic right to life and liberty.

We are the only nation in the world where guns outnumber our population. Firearms, semi-automatic, and automatic guns are driving the death toll to unimaginable rates across prominent cities in our country.

Every day, 120 Americans are likely to die from a swift bullet while more than 120 are wounded. The figure may seem small but over the course of a year, the statistics climbed to 44,341 according to Everytown Research.

In 2021, the Pew Research Center reported findings that chronicle 81% of murders involving a firearm and cite more than half of gun violence deaths that year as suicides.

This has a stark and sobering effect on our population, if we fail to curb the deterrents that condone violence in a cultivated society like ours, we will face irreversible repercussions. While violent video games, lack of mental health awareness, and abusive situations may encourage erratic behavior that sparks gun violence, fewer killings would be committed if we eliminated or heavily regulated civilian possession of guns.

Regulations will not completely prohibit the sale of handguns but protect the ethical reserve of our nation.

There are viable solutions to our extraneous problem. We could follow the example of North Korea and Eritrea and completely prohibit civilian gun ownership. Or follow in the wake of Canada which has a ban on large capacity magazines, implements mandatory safety training, and imposed a 28-day waiting period for purchases after a mass shooting in Montreal.

The National Rifle Association must understand that regulations will not completely prohibit the sale of handguns but protect the ethical reserve of our nation. Our second amendment right to bear arms was written under circumstantial laws that likely referenced muskets rather than AK-47 gas-operated assault rifles. The differentiation must be acknowledged and we must recognize the profound impact of illegally imported guns and their impact on society.

President Biden wants to revisit the ban on assault weapons which he successfully achieved as a Senator in 1994 which curbed gun related deaths for 10 years and ended prematurely due to the sunset clause advocated for by the NRA. Biden now says he wants to restore the ban and this is something we should all seriously consider.

According to the Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) system NICS, there are 393 million civilian-owned firearms in the U.S. and only 6.06 million are properly registered. This means that the few lax regulations in place to prevent criminals, the mentally ill, and children from obtaining weapons of destruction are being bypassed. If we want to see a change, leaders and lawmakers must acknowledge the public health crisis on our hands and administer guidelines that follow suit.

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