



How Small-Town America Sees Guns

Adapted from Robert Leonard, *The New York Times*

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Many...living in cities, are left without an understanding of rural culture and its core values. Our deepest cultural decision after abortion might be on guns

I grew up around guns and remember how proud I was when I completed my N.R.A. sponsored gun safety training in Boy Scouts, back when the N.R.A. was primarily known for teaching gun appreciation and safety rather than lobbying.

...After the school shootings in Parkland, Fla., a friend who has lead active-shooter trainings in schools believes that better background checks might help prevent some gun violence, and that gun owners need to do a better job securing their firearms. But he doesn't believe that significant gun control measures will ever meet approval in rural America including a ban on AR-15-style semiautomatic rifles. ...He truly believes that depriving law-abiding citizens of their guns will not prevent gun violence, and that gun control has never stopped criminals from getting weapons and never will. ...The blame lies with the gunman, not the gun.

To understand why many in rural America believe this, you must start with first principles, because the argument ultimately isn't about guns; it runs even deeper than the Second Amendment. It's a matter of liberty and personal responsibility. Even after a horrific event like the school shooting in Florida, where 17 people were killed, more gun control would compromise those first principles. For them, compromising those principles would be even more horrific and detrimental to society than any shooting. What my rural friends see is not gun control, but rather control, period.

Many people own guns because they simply enjoy them—shooting them, the feel of them, their history, their role in protection. They want guns for the same person you might want a particular kind of car. They also believe that having a gun makes them less likely to become a victim. Here in Iowa, guns are tools. We hunt with them. Because we live in a free country, we can have a great many things. But few things deserved special mention in our Constitution. Guns did.

I know those great kids from Parkland are demanding bans on AR-15s and other actions, and I understand why. ...Maybe we are stumbling to a better sort of dialogue, led by these kids from Florida and students all over the country who protest gun violence. There is room for some compromise.

[Robert Leonard is the news director for the radio stations KNIA and KRLS]

**The Episcopal Church is a proponent of gun safety & gun control
Today we stand with you**

We support:

- Gun registration & permit requirements
- Regulation of military-style assault weapons & high-capacity magazines
- Tightening laws against gun trafficking
- Banning full-auto conversion kits
- Gun safety training
- Funding for research to prevent gun violence
- The Sandy Hook Principles
- Improvements to background checks



Join the Episcopal Public Policy Network to TAKE ACTION by writing postcards to your representatives and senators in support of the above.

Central Texas U. S Representatives; select the Congressman who represents your district:

Congressman Roger Williams , District 25	Congressman Lamar Smith , District 21
1323 Longworth House Office Bldg	2409 Rayburn House Office Bldg
Washington D.C. 20515	Washington D.C. 20515
Congressman Lloyd Doggett , District 35	Congressman Mike McCaul , District 10
2307 Rayburn House Office Bldg	2001 Rayburn Office Bldg
Washington D.C. 20515	Washington D.C. 20515
Congressman Bill Flores , District 17	Congressman John Carter , District 31
2440 Rayburn House Office Bldg	2110 Rayburn Office Bldg
Washington D.C. 20515	Washington D.C. 20515

Texas Senators:

Senator Ted Cruz	Senator John Cornyn
Russell Senate Office Bldg. #404	517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington D.C. 20510	Washington D.C. 20510
OR:	OR:
300 E. 8 th Street #961	221 W. 6th Street Suite 1530
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