

The Intelligencer

Opinion

While we wait, another tragedy unfolds

By Shreya Babu

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On Wednesday, Feb. 14, people were celebrating their stories of love and happy endings during Valentine's Day. But for the friends and families of the 17 victims of the Parkland shooting, this day marked one of lives being taken too soon.

Three heroic teachers, 14 innocent children. Some were only 14-years-old. Others were high school seniors, already committed to colleges for the upcoming fall. More lives lost to a sick gunman because this country is too stubborn to change its gun laws. We go through the same cycle every time a tragedy like this occurs. It is incredulous to me how we are allowing lives to be taken and doing nothing about it.

Instead, the government has done the opposite. President Trump signed a law that actually allows mentally ill people to purchase guns more easily. When a school shooting occurs, we brush it off and convey our "thoughts and prayers." We shake our heads, commenting on how unfortunate it is that such mentally unstable people would do something like this. We make it about mental health, while hiding the true issue behind our backs.

If this is about mental health, then why did we make it easier for mentally ill people to buy guns? And why can't America just agree to start taking action against this severe problem? "Liberals can't even let the families mourn in peace — they immediately just start pushing their anti-gun agenda."

The afflicted families are not just crying. Lori Alhadeff is the mother of one of the youngest victims, Alyssa Alhadeff, age 14. "President Trump, we need action, we need change," she said. "Get these guns out of the hands of these young kids and get these guns off the streets."

The superintendent of Broward County Public Schools also had something to say: "Now is the time for the country to have a real conversation on sensible gun controls in this country." So why do we force the country to wait for a significant amount of time after each shooting to start having the conversation? While we wait silently, another school shooting happens.

In my own school district — Central Bucks — a petition is going around to install metal detectors in every school. We have changed our lockdown drill protocol. No longer are we to lock our doors, turn off the lights and hide in the corner. Now, students are being taught to adhere to the ALICE drill. The “C” in ALICE stands for counter. If we are left with no other options, we are told to pick up any object that can act as a weapon, from staplers to chairs. And if the intruder were to enter our door, we must attack him or her with our weapons and create chaos and noise as distractions. Our elementary schoolers are also being taught this drill.

It is horrific to think that this is what the world has come to. It is now necessary to teach kids how to fight back against school shooters, because now this drill could be the difference between life or death.

We are not stopping the problems from occurring, we are simply preparing on how to survive for the next time it does.

Columbine. Aurora. Sandy Hook. Orlando. Vegas. And now Parkland. When will it stop?

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