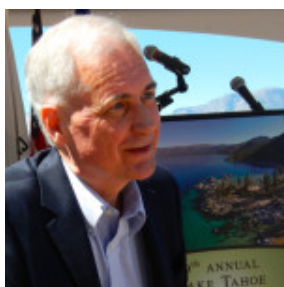


Opinion: Preventing more Parklands

By Tom McClintock

For years the left has attacked the Second Amendment as the progenitor of gun violence, and demonized the millions of Americans who support their right of self-defense as abettors of child murder.

Yet it is the policies of the left that have produced this tragically familiar story: a deranged individual, known to police to be violent and dangerous, is ignored until he brings a gun into a gun-free zone and massacres defenseless victims at will.



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The bromide of the left is that enough “gun control” will keep guns out of the hands of such criminals and madmen. After all, our drug laws have been so successful at keeping drugs out of the hands of addicts.

In 50 years of experience with gun laws, we have found them extremely effective at disarming law-abiding citizens. We have found them extremely ineffective at disarming criminals, madmen and terrorists. They invariably create a society where the law-abiding are unarmed, and murderers are as well-armed as ever. Our schools are a microcosm of such a society, where the gunman is king.

Parkland did have one armed officer on campus, but according to his attorney, he was under standing orders from Broward County's politically correct sheriff "to seek cover and assess the situation in order to communicate what one observes to other law enforcement." That didn't work.

Fortunately, we know what does. Executing murderers works. Locking up other gun predators until they are old and feeble works. Confining the dangerously mentally ill so they can be treated works. Responsible armed citizens who can return fire works. These laws protected us well for many decades.

But beginning in the 1960s, under relentless attack by leftist politicians, our governments abandoned them. Today, we are reaping the whirlwind. Indeed, just days after the Parkland massacre, Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf tipped off criminal illegal immigrants of an impending raid by law enforcement – including many charged with gun crimes, criminal gang affiliations, weapons violations and police battery. The left applauded her irresponsible act and then seamlessly returned to its advocacy of disarming the communities these gun predators escaped into.

Depending on criminals and madmen to obey gun laws is delusional. Authorities turned a blind eye to repeated complaints that the Parkland shooter illegally brandished firearms and threatened lives. In many cases, criminal background checks are rendered ineffective because information that would lead to disqualification is never entered into the system. And many more just obtain weapons from family, theft or the ubiquitous black market.

No one gives a second thought to an armed guard at a bank to protect our money. But any suggestion that armed guards should protect our children at school is met with hoots of derision. Hardening security at schools must invariably be backed by armed force, yet leftists won't have it.

Why shouldn't school employees, trained and entrusted by their local sheriffs with concealed weapons permits, be allowed to use those permits in our schools to stop the next massacre? That doesn't mean requiring every teacher to be armed – it means having the common sense to allow the same safety measures in our schools that we provide in our communities.

Chief Edward M. Davis, the legendary chief of the Los Angeles Police Department during the late 1960s and '70s, introduced such innovations as “neighborhood watch” and community-based policing that engaged private citizens. It worked. During his tenure, violent crime declined in Los Angeles while it skyrocketed nationally. He fiercely opposed gun control laws because he viewed responsible, law-abiding citizens as an integral part of policing and the first line of defense against crime.

Wise and effective laws take the world as it is, not as we wish it would be. As long as guns exist – and there are nearly a billion of them on this planet – criminals and madmen will have them despite all our laws. We once did everything possible within the rule of law to keep dangerous people off our streets and protect the right of peaceful citizens to defend themselves. Abandoning these laws has produced the bloody legacy we now endure and returning to them is the only sure path to preventing more Parklands.

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