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"The majority of those who died today were children, beautiful little kids between the ages of 5 and 10 years old. They had their entire lives ahead of them — birthdays, graduations, weddings, kids of their own." America watched with a blurry vision as President Obama wiped tears away from his own eyes while grieving for the Sandy Hook Elementary School victims who passed away in early December. The twenty-seven victims were killed by twenty year old Adam Lanza who has been speculated to have several mental illnesses including schizophrenia and asperger's. Many questions were raised regarding gun control after the attack like why a gun was so available to a man so unstable. The harm that firearms cause has affected families from Newtown, Connecticut to the house where my mother grew up in Citrus Heights, California and everywhere in between. The most effective way to reduce firearm injuries, intentional or accidental, is by regulating firearms and eventually banning handguns and assault weapons.

Most people believe that guns are necessary to have in houses for protection against intruders, however, the only thing my grandmother needed was protection against was herself. She committed suicide when my mother was five years old, affecting not only her three children, but also her only grandchild; me. I can't completely blame the gun for her actions or my grandfather for having a gun in the house knowing my grandmother's condition. However, it is hard not to wonder what might be different if access to a gun had not been so easy. I know it would have made my mother a stronger and more confident person and may have provided an exemplary relationship for how to raise her own daughter. I believe that it would have improved the relationship I have with my grandfather, who, as of now, refuses to talk to my mother or me because of the resemblance we share with my grandmother. And I know that because of this one incident, this one gun, things are much different than what they could have been. If my grandmother had not been left with a gun that day while everyone else was off at work and school she might still be around.

Americans on a national level will continue to view the Sandy Hook massacre as a dark moment in American history for years to come, but on a more personal level the families of the 38,000 people who committed suicide in 2010 will also be, affected like me, decades later. By reducing the number of firearms in circulation through stricter regulations and an eventual ban of hand guns and assault weapons, we can help prevent all kinds of tragedies from occurring and encourage people to seek help instead. We are a nation of change and improvement and we must show that by implementing stricter gun policies.