

Casey Stockel

Granite Bay High School, Granite Bay

Please give a moment of silence to the children who never got to graduate, the ones who dreamed of becoming firefighters, doctors, and ballerinas, the ones that never got to open their presents Christmas morning. A moment of silence replaces the giggles and smiles of children. Whether intentional, accidental, or a simple joke, gun-related injuries are a growing epidemic. It can't be fixed by a simple prescription of antibiotics; it's an epidemic that spreads through our country snatching lives by the pull of a trigger. The remedy to this epidemic? Regulation and bans on assault and hand weapons. This is the most effective course of action, because it will reduce the amount of deaths, as well be economically efficient for our economy.

Although many may argue that the 2nd amendment protects the right to bear arms, the right to life is paramount to this amendment. The Constitution was designed around the proponents of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, and within the status quo these civil rights are not being upheld. According to childrensdefense.org, "In 2008, 2,947 children and teens died from guns in the United States and 2,793 died in 2009 for a total of 5,740—one child or teen every three hours, eight every day, 55 every week for two years." Children are the future of America, but with the amount of gun-related deaths, mass shootings and suicides increasing, the odds of surviving to adulthood are dwindling. To eliminate the accessory to these accidents, suicides, murder, would eliminate the deaths caused by handgun. A common saying is, "don't fight fire with fire," but if we eliminate fire then what is there to fight with? The same concept can be applied with guns; if there are no guns then there are no gun related deaths.

While private industries are raking in the profits from the gun industry, our country is paying the costs. According to Corso and colleagues, the "financial cost to society resulting from gun-related assaults and homicides in 2000. The amount totaled \$17.4 billion, including \$0.8 billion in direct medical costs and \$16.6 billion in lost productivity. In the same year, self-inflicted firearm injuries and suicides cost society \$16.4 billion." This is a total of 33.4 billion costs to our country; money that could have gone towards schools, building roads, lowering the National Debt. Currently, companies that have ignored gun-law regulations and disregarded the waiting period are being rewarded. It is time to give justice to the lives who would have been saved, if the companies enforced this rules. Not only will we be able to save innocent lives, but help our economy through firearm regulations.

In recollection of the Sandy Hook incident, President Obama stated "Our hearts are broken today. As a country, we have been through this too many times." We as a country need action now; we cannot allow ourselves to let these innocent children die in vain. With action, we will come closer to ending these moments of silence.