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11. Eleven mass shootings occurred in the United States in 2012. Week after week, we have heard news of yet another shooting. Since 1980 the nation has suffered 137 school shootings, with 297 people slain. What we don't consider in those statistics is that these shootings leave more victims than those declared legally dead. More people suffer after an attack like Sandy Hook or Columbine than just those who are killed. Because of the actions of just a few people, friends and family of those taken pay the price for the rest of their lives. Something needs to be done.

Society rings with desperate cries to protect our people. The ripple effect of each killing devastates communities, states, and even the nation. In the wake of Sandy Hook, people across the United States ached for the residents of Newton, and all our prayers went out on their behalf. The same thing happened after Columbine, after the Aurora, Colorado shooting, and after the Portland shooting. The list can and does go on.

71. The City of Stockton broke its own record with 71 individual murders in 2012. In our preoccupation with mass shootings, we too often overlook those killed in single acts of murder. Media reports focus our eyes on tragedies known nationwide, and we inadvertently add to the suffering by ignoring the heartbreaking losses of individual shootings that have become so common that we are numb.

The effects of gun violence are immense; tearing families apart is just the most obvious one. Our great nation finds itself on the verge of panic in even innocent situations. Just before the new year, a metal sign fell in the Arden Fair Mall during a scuffle. One person yelled "Shooter" without thinking and sent the people in the mall fleeing for their lives as chaos ensued. Our nation is now constantly afraid that there is nothing we can do to stop a maniac with a gun.

1. One weapons ban is all that we need. It is the single action that can remedy the illness that plagues us. Almost all weapons used to kill are obtained through a legal, or not explicitly illegal, manner. Adam Lanza took the weapons he used from his mother's closet. His mom, one of his victims, had legal reasons for owning those weapons. Our government can and should do everything possible to prevent gun violence from happening. By enacting comprehensive weapons bans, the government will gain the ability to control the use of firearms in the nation to the largest extent possible. It is commonly known and widely understood that firearms kill and maim. Why then, when we have the power to stop it, do we allow our citizens to be killed? The numbers are overwhelming. Averaging almost 1 mass shooting per month, coupled with a record breaking 71 murders in a single city, our society is in obvious need of change. It will never cease to amaze: one weapons ban can stop hundreds of killings.