

The jarring violence of last week seared into our consciousness. It started in Portland, Oregon with a mall shooting that might have been worse and ended in Newtown, Connecticut where it's impossible to imagine that it would be worse. It's part of an ongoing pattern of carnage where we lose one life to gun violence every 20 minutes, every hour, every day. The mass murder's rampage gets the nation's attention, but the same total loss of life at Sandy Hook happens more than twice every day, all year long.

This is personal for me not just because the mall shooter was in my district, but because I had a high school friend who was killed with a random freak drive-by shooting. My brother took his life with a handgun as a young man. I've supported gun safety provisions at the state and federal level at every opportunity.

It might be different now. Not just because the horrific images of a parade of funerals for little children.

I salute mayor Bloomberg's unstinting advocacy for gun safety and mobilizing America's mayors who bear the brunt of gun violence. I welcome the president's leadership and I will support any reform that he advances. But I would urge my colleagues to read the columns in the Sunday Times by my fellow Oregonian [Nicholas Kristof](#) and [Ezra Klein's article](#) in today's Washington Post. They demonstrate that we know what works. There are examples around the world. Even in America with lax, weak gun protections, there are in fact some regulations in some places and they make a difference.

Let's treat gun violence like any public health crisis, which I would say losing 30,000 lives a year would qualify as a crisis. We need to treat it like the threat to public health and families that it is; treat a gun like any other consumer product. This is how we slashed the auto death rate: vehicle design, driver behavior, enforcement and education. For guns, it starts when Congress stops being intimidated by the extremists, and then just do what the majority of gun owners agree we should do: renew the assault weapon ban (which many of us will introduce under the leadership of our dear friend and colleague Carolyn McCarthy), ban the large magazines and the most devastating bullets, and close the gun show loophole for starters. These are things that NRA members agree with.

Let's care as much about real guns as we do about toy gun consumer protection to start us down the road of making our children safer by treating children's gun safety like they're auto safety. All the air bags, anti-drunk driving campaigns, child-seats, drivers education, careful licensing - it slashed the accident rate. It didn't eliminate them altogether, but we cannot imagine a world without these protections for our families. Let's see if we can imagine a world where our children are safer from gun violence, and then make it happen.