

HILL COUNTRY NEWS

Gun owners can —and should! — work to end gun violence

Rabbi Rebecca Reice - Tuesday, January 7, 2020

You can be a gun owner and/or love a gun owner and still work to end gun violence.

These realities are not mutually exclusive. Growing up as a Girl Scout in North Carolina, gun safety was something we learned and practiced at Girl Scout camp. At the University of Texas, I went shooting at the on-campus gun range with friends in the Navy's Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) and we certainly practiced safety and discipline.

The prevention of accidents has always been part of the gun culture in my community of friends and peers. My gun-owning relatives, including Orthodox Jews, always bought a gun safe before a gun. We all believe in safety and safety must remain a real part of our local, statewide, and national conversation around gun violence prevention.

Right now, while the Texas Legislature is not in session, it is exactly the time to ask our national leaders to take action. An extreme protection order bill was introduced in both the US House and Senate on the one year anniversary of the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL. The House Judiciary Committee last amended their copy on September 10, 2019. The Senate Judiciary Committee hasn't touched it since Valentine's Day. It's high time to ask our Senior Texas senator, who serves on that Senate committee, to take action toward bringing such bills up for a vote.

Jewish wisdom teaches that if you don't know if you are selling weaponry or the materials to make weapons to people who are known to be safe or people who have a history of violence, then you may not sell. American Law responds to this wisdom with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). When someone goes to buy a firearm from a Federal Firearms Licensee (FFL), that FFL (a.k.a. the seller) contacts the NICS and the NICS staff performs the background check on the buyer.

But, if the seller doesn't get an answer from the NICS in three business days, he can sell without a completed background check. In addition, there are no required background checks for gun purchases at gun shows or other private sales. Resulting from this loophole, the shooter in Midland-Odessa was able to purchase his gun from a private seller, though he had previously failed a background check and been denied a gun purchase from an FFL.

Addressing these loopholes is the exact topic of two bills, HR1112 and HR8, respectively. Each passed by the US House at the end of February, and each were read twice in the Senate in March. It



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is time to urge Senator Cornyn to take action to prevent gun violence and save lives in Texas! As a senior member of the Senate he can help pass these two bills to close these loopholes.

Central Texas Interfaith is calling on Senator Cornyn to act. We are gathering thousands of postcards from Texans like us to send to Senator John Cornyn, showing that we stand with our brothers and sisters in El Paso in the fight for gun violence prevention through national policies. When you sign and return one of these post cards in person or **online** (<http://www.austininterfaith.org/gunsafety>) you are adding your voice to the call asking Senator John Cornyn to advance legislation now!

With the New Year 2020 just days away, Texans of faith pray for life, asking God for a year of health and happiness. But don't just ask. Tell the Almighty, tell Texas, tell yourself: I can do something to improve life and increase health and happiness.

Sign online or in person. Join me and thousands of our fellow Texans in sending a message to Senator Cornyn that he, too, can do something. Don't wait for someone else. Do something!