

Hello, this is Tom Cookman with a Community Comment

We are all shocked and disgusted with the recent shooting that happened on the campus of Umpqua Community College. These sickening murders have brought the entire gun control debate back to the forefront of the conversations we are having at work, at home and in the news. Here is a post my wife put on Facebook:

"This is my opinion on gun control: Guns will always exist, and so will predators, drug-induced criminals, and mentally ill who try to do harm to others. Whether or not guns are illegal or ownership to them is reduced, these people will be able to acquire a gun or other weapon with the intention to kill. To take away our easiest means of protection from these maniacs is ludicrous. Also, we as a people, should keep in mind that there are other countries who'd love to see us unarmed. And, last of all, history shows that governments have been known to kill or control their unarmed citizens. It's okay if you disagree. Tom and I will keep our guns and do our best to protect you if the need arises. In fact, I'm planning to get a concealed weapons permit, so that if a creep comes after me and other innocent people in a public place, I can at least go down swinging." This Facebook post has generated a lot of feedback and there has only been one negative response by one of our friends. This is a limited sampling of society and since the people who are on our Facebook are friends, they usually share similar beliefs, but to only have one negative post is surprising to me. I tend to believe that a large percentage of our society is in favor of our constitutional right to keep and bear arms. There are approximately 350,000,000 firearms in the United States and there isn't any amount of legislation that can reign in those guns. The people who are killing other people with firearms are the last people who will abide by any new law we pass. Every

jurisdiction that has the strictest gun laws doesn't seem to experience a decrease in gun-related crimes. The District of Columbia, is one of the strictest areas when it comes to gun control. How does their extensive legislation translate to murders with guns? The gun murder rate per 100,000 inhabitants in Washington DC is 16.5. This is more than double of any other state and proof that gun control isn't the solution. Switzerland is one of the safest countries in the world and their citizens are armed. Switzerland's militia is comprised primarily of young men between the ages of 20 and 30, who undergo weapons training, and they are obligated to keep their weapons at home. In 2014 there were only 18 firearm homicides total, which is .49 per 100,000 people. The residents of Washington, D.C., with its strict gun laws, are 33.5 times more likely to be murdered with a firearm than the citizens of Switzerland. Where do we go from here? We all want these senseless murders to stop. The statistics prove that an armed society is a safer society. I would rather live in Switzerland, where there are automatic weapons in the homes, than in Washington DC, where the laws prohibit and restrict gun ownership. The bumper sticker that reads " If Guns Are Outlawed, Only Outlaws Will Have Guns" is a statistical fact. The numbers prove this statement to be true. I am in favor of doing everything we can to protect innocent lives, and if you are armed, you are less likely to be a homicide victim.

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