

To the House Select Committee on Mass Violence Prevention and Community Safety.

From Billy Lannom

Re: Duty (4)

I have perused two of the more offensive submittals to the committee. Namely those of Jeff Temple of The University of Texas and Mark Barden of Sandy Hook Promise. In both cases the respondent is suggesting Background checks for stranger to stranger firearm transfers and “red flag laws” wherein legally owned firearms are confiscated from one who has not committed a crime because someone reports that they may be contemplating a crime.

It has been repeatedly proven that these two fantasies of the gun control crowd have NO VALIDITY.

Dealing first with the musings of Jeff Temple of that bastion of left wing thinking The University of Texas.

The publish or parish syndrome has, for years, afflicted the professional world with thousands of useless studies, graphs, charts, lectures, and essays in an effort by professors to demonstrate that they are putting the grants they receive to use so they can apply for more grants. Temple conducted a study which included responses from 663 people and formed his conclusions from those responses. 663 people. Hardly a broad cross section of the Texas population since his respondents average age was 22 years and since the respondents ethnicity was 26% white (70% in the actual population), approximately correct 34% latino (37% actual) and 27% black (11% in the actual population).

Temple concludes that people who owned or had access to guns were 18 times more likely to have threatened someone with a gun than those who did not own or have access to guns. Do we need a PhD to conduct a study to arrive at the conclusion that those who have no gun are unlikely to threaten someone with a gun?

Temple found that those who carried a gun outside the home did so because they felt safer. Apparently he feels that carrying guns outside the home is a form of gun violence or contributes to gun violence. He suggests that creating a safer overall environment might mitigate the tendency to carry a gun. I agree but, the social workers, psychologists, etc. he suggests aren't going to do it. More aggressive law enforcement might stand a chance, but nothing will create a safer environment until society quits accepting an unsafe environment and quits sympathizing with and trying to “help” the poor downtrodden criminals.

Like most of the gun control crowd Temple lumps suicide in with homicide under the heading “gun violence”. Temple cites statistics that deaths by firearms break down to 33% homicide, 61% suicide, the remainder being accidents or other. Suicide is not gun violence. Suicide is hopelessness and a hopeless person intent on taking their own life does not have to have a gun. The trick is to get those people out of the mood to kill

themselves or others. Trying to restrict access to one of the many ways of killing is not going to accomplish the desired result.

It has become fashionable for the gun controllers to advocate for so called “red flag laws” wherein a supposedly interested person reports another as contemplating gun violence thus paving the way for the state to confiscate the other person’s firearms. You don’t need much life experience to envision rejected lovers, estranged husbands or wives, overly protective parents, disillusioned friends, etc. reporting folks merely as a means to harass and inconvenience the target person. Certainly if one hears of a planned attack they have a duty to speak up to the authorities who can investigate such plans. Let’s not set up a situation where mere suspicion can lead to confiscation of legally own property.

Moving on to Mark Barden of Sandy Hook Promise.

While I certainly sympathize with Mr. Barden’s loss of his son and, indeed, all affected by the Sandy Hook tragedy, I strongly disagree with some of Barden’s suggestions.

The concept of “see something, say something”, is an excellent way of educating the young to participate in making our world a safer place. However some other suggestions of Barden’s merely echo the wants of the gun control loonies.

Barden cites the stranger to stranger “loophole” implying that firearm transfers which bypass background checks are more likely to be used in violence. He suggests that requiring all firearm transfers be conducted through background checks would help limit violence. The background check system is a good one but it is not flawless. The last page of this submittal will list 23 instances where a mass shooter obtained his firearm legally and passed a background check. If you want to do something to make the background checks better then require all states and jurisdictions to report ineligible persons to the FBI’s database. Restricting law-abiding people trading firearms accomplishes nothing.

It should be noted that none of the suggested solutions would have prevented the Sandy Hook tragedy. There was no clue that the socially awkward shooter was contemplating or planning a mass shooting. He did not pass a background check, he killed his own mother to obtain the guns he used.

Barden again limps suicide in with “gun violence”. Certainly suicide by gunshot is violent but trying to curb suicide by restricting only one of many ways of committing suicide is silly. I have an idea. Why not control illegal drugs thus limiting the deaths by overdose. That should help and be easy to do.

I grew up in the 40’s, and 50’s. We had plenty of guns. My Dad, Mom, and Uncles were my gun control. We had no mass shootings and certainly no school mass shootings. Figure out what has changed since the 40’s, and 50’s. Change it back to the way it was and you will be on the road to a more pleasant world. Continue to try to restrict people’s freedom and you will make things worse.

How did mass shooters obtain their weapons?

Here is a partial list of high profile public attackers who acquired their guns via background checks:

- Parkland high school attacker (February 14, 2018)
- Texas church attacker (November 5, 2017)
- Las Vegas attacker (October 1, 2017)
- the Alexandria attacker (June 14, 2017))
- Orlando attacker (June 12, 2016)
- the UCLA gunman (June 1, 2016))
- the San Bernardino attackers (December 2, 2015)
- the Colorado Springs attacker (October 31, 2015)
- the Umpqua Community College attacker (October 1, 2015)
- Alison Parker's attacker (August 26, 2015)
- the Lafayette movie theater attacker (July 23, 2015)
- the Chattanooga attacker (July 16, 2015)
- the alleged Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal attacker (Jun 17, 2015)
- the Muhammad Carton Contest attackers (May 3, 2014)
- the Las Vegas cop killers (June 9, 2015)
- the Santa Barbara attacker (May 23, 2014)
- the Fort Hood attacker (April 2, 2014)
- the Arapahoe High School attacker (December 13, 2013)
- the D.C. Navy Yard attacker (September 16, 2013)
- the Aurora movie theater attacker (July 20, 2012)
- Gabby Giffords' attacker (January 8, 2011)
- the Fort Hood attacker (November 5, 2009)
- the Virginia Tech attacker (April 16, 2007), and many others.

The list of attackers who acquired their guns via background checks demonstrates the futility of looking at such checks as a way to stop violent attackers.