

THE TRIBAL TRIBUNE

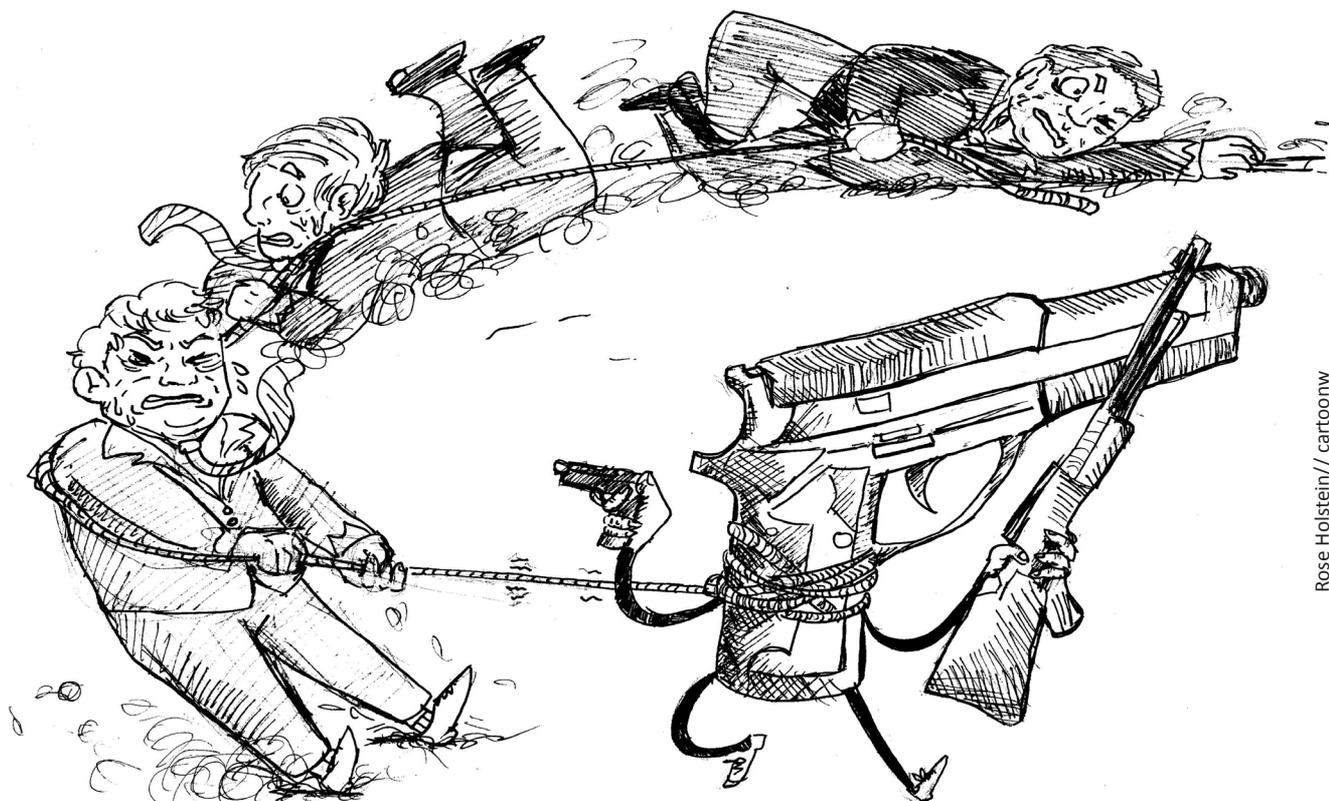
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Rose Holstein// cartoonw

No time for debate

Recent tragedies spark urgent need for effective gun policy

10,108.

The number is glaring back through the faded desktop screen, full of tension. The cursor hovers over the web page, fingers frozen on the mouse. The computer refreshes.

10,113.

That's just how fast it happens.

10,113 -- the number of people killed by gun violence so far in 2016, according to gunviolencearchive.org

And it's only September.

To put it all in perspective, think back to 2012. In December of that year, a gunman walked into Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., and killed 20 children, six adults and himself.

It was a day that shook the nation to its very core. It was a day where the purest and

most innocent lives were taken by the coldest, most soulless form of violence. It was a day that policy-makers were forced to look in the mirror and say, "We didn't do enough."

But it's a day that we have allowed to happen again and again.

Since then, there have been over 1,126 mass shootings, according to recent report by Vox, and each tragedy is met with increasingly routine debates between politicians over gun control policy.

Key word: debate.

This is the mindset that we as a nation and Congress as our representative body must get away from if the number on the screen is to stop rising by the hour. The mindset that the question of what to do about gun violence is even still a question is the problem. The mindset that one person's right to own an AK-47 is more important than innocent lives that are lost by the day, literally, is the problem. The mindset that it's okay to have gun shows where you can purchase guns with no waiting period and no background check is

part of the problem.

That's not to say that individual rights aren't important. It's not saying to toss out the Second Amendment or fuel any sort of notion that anyone is "coming to take all the guns."

In fact, look at the language of the Second Amendment. It begins, "a well regulated militia."

"Well regulated."

Do school shootings, thousands of deaths a year and a violence-saturated news culture sound like a "well regulated militia?"

No.

The need for national gun control is urgent, and it starts by putting partisanship aside and passing basic policy that is already favored by the majority of Americans, such as universal background checks, waiting periods, and regulations for the type of guns people can buy.

But it's less about the "what" and more about the "when," -- and the time is now.

10,117.

The number just keeps rising.

Editorial



In memory of Amanda Wheeler
 Sept. 25, 1998 - Aug. 20, 2016