

# Relief to Gun Violence in America: Banning Assault Weapons

Miah Cerrillo, a 12-year-old survivor of the Robb Elementary School massacre in Uvalde, Texas, feared the shooter would come back to kill her so she dipped her hands in her friend's blood and smeared it on her own body to play dead. The gunman was armed with an AR-15, a military grade rifle used by the U.S. soldiers in battle conflicts. Police officers who responded to the shooting informed investigators that this weapon compelled them to wait for a Border Patrol SWAT team before entering the school. This took over an hour.

The death toll in Uvalde would have still been significant even if the SWAT team had responded sooner, and the police officers would have suffered intense casualties had they gone in alone. Investigators of the conflict concluded that most victims were already killed in the minutes before police even arrived. The law enforcement was not at fault in this tragic situation; it was the gunman holding the fatal assault rifle.

The New York University School of Medicine published a report of U.S. public mass shootings resulting in four or more deaths and discovered that more than 85% of such fatalities were caused by assault rifles. From events like the Robb Elementary School massacre, it is evident that assault weapons make mass-shootings much more lethal. However, **State level prohibition on assault weapons will alleviate mass shooting fatalities and reduce gun violence in the United States.**

Assault weapons are exceptionally dangerous, designed to fire rapidly and accurately, with the capability of causing significant damage in a short amount of time. These firearms can shoot multiple rounds per second, and their large magazines can hold up to 100 rounds or more. Because of this, assault rifles can cause substantial damage in mass shooting tragedies. In fact, these weapons have been used in some of the deadliest shootings in recent United States history, including the 2017 Las Vegas shooting and the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, which took the lives of 20 children and six adults. By removing assault weapons all together from the market, states would significantly reduce the risk of school shootings.

In most mass shootings, the AR-15-style rifle seems to almost always be the weapon of choice. Dr. Cornelia Griggs, a pediatric and critical care surgeon at Massachusetts General Hospital, told ABC News that "That's not to say that there aren't other rifles that can cause quite a lot of damage in the human body, but this type of injury is devastating and unique to many military-grade weapons."

Many conservative groups and organizations stress that banning assault weapons would not stop gun violence, and that people are going to find access to them whether it is legal or not. However, this argument is flawed because while it may not solve the problem entirely, it is a very necessary step in the right direction. It is much more difficult to initiate a mass shooting with a handgun or a hunting rifle than it is with an assault weapon. Others argue that banning any firearms would infringe upon their second amendment right to bear arms, and they would be unable to defend themselves. However, a state ban on assault weapons would not mean a ban on all guns; it would mean that weapons designed for mass killings would be removed from the market. After all, assault weapons' use in a civilian context is entirely recreational and does not serve a practical purpose for self-defense or hunting.

Several states in the United States have implemented bans on assault weapons, and have seen remarkable results in regards to reducing mass-shootings. Studies have shown that these bans have been effective in reducing gun violence in these states. For example, a study published in the Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery found that the Connecticut assault weapons ban was associated with a 40%

reduction in gun homicides in the state. Encouraging state legislation across the United States that will ban assault weapons will enable more communities to experience the same accomplishments.

Almost a year has passed since the Robb Elementary School massacre, and Texas legislators have emphasized stronger school safety measures and police training, but they refuse to enact gun control efforts. Children should not get ready for school in the morning wondering if they'll make it home alive for dinner at the end of the day, nor should they witness their classmates fall as victims to assault rifles.

**AUTHOR BIO:**

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