🇺🇸 MASS SHOOTINGS: FINDING COMMON GROUND!

By Steve Bakke 🇺🇸 March 5, 2018

Progress reducing mass killings won't be made unless a body of "common ground" is created. Because we have such extreme polarization in America, establishing common ground requires "reaching" by all participants. We will start with intense disagreement, but that will change – it has to! I'm betting a majority will come to agree on most of the following conclusions.

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Our Founders' opinions about firearms reflect a presumption of order and competence achieved though rules, regulations, training, and wise firearm controls. Let's agree that firearm regulation is constitutional.

We must realize that unrestricted freedom and mobility aren't compatible with the highest levels of safety. It's apparent that mass killings have far different solutions than other homicides. We thought we had a solution in 1990 with passage of The Gun-Free Zones Act of 1990, but that made the problem worse.

Gun-free zones are not oases of safety – rather, they're danger zones. Over the years, one soft target after another piled on security to reduce gun violence, while schools raced to the top of the list of poorly protected targets – tragedies waiting to happen. Attacks happen fast and conclude quickly because there's typically minimal resistance. It's very possible that deterrence, including more intense, armed school security, may save more lives than new legislation. Arming a limited number of teachers should not be dismissed from consideration, as long as they are qualified, trained, and willing.

It's fruitless to constantly blame the NRA, even though doing so feels good. Rather than putting the NRA on the defensive, and wasting its energy and ours, let's be radical and try bringing its training, security and technical knowledge to bear on this problem. The NRA's evil reputation doesn't reflect its activities. In terms of lobbying expenditures, for which it's most scorned, it ranked only 154th on the list of lobbying expenditures for the 2016 election cycle.

Let's not waste time on confiscation of firearms. Doing so is a pipedream. And why mythologize and single out the AR-15? The bad guys have lots of options that are just as lethal, and worse.

We've ignored our evolving culture's contributions to the problem. Moral and behavioral boundaries have changed, sometimes even disappeared. The battle over abortion, and the definition and sanctity of human life, is an issue unique mostly to the last few decades. I believe this reflects a devaluation of life?

Rejection of MLK's legacy of deemphasizing racial differences has increased society's polarization, with identity politics and less commitment to assimilation as root causes. And let's not forget "urban poverty plantations," those hotbeds of hatred, where good intentions have trapped generations of minorities and other underprivileged citizens. These and other cultural characteristics and changes have lowered concern for fellow human beings.

There are many ineffective gun laws. Think about all we've learned about mistakes made gathering, interpreting and communicating information necessary to enforce laws and regulations. And, dealing with mental illness is still a mystery.

"Sacred cows" must be set aside. Unfortunately, each political extreme has "off limits" ideas it won't consider. Armed security in schools is generally rejected by progressives; and many conservatives won't compromise on regulating certain weaponry.

Too many politicians and self-described experts want quick and easy answers. They're inclined to avoid the "heavy lifting" necessary to better understand the problem. Any solution will include repealing ineffective laws, sharpening enforcement of potentially successful existing laws and regulations, and providing armed security for schools and elsewhere.

Let's get used to the fact that expressing ideas like these, some being controversial, must be tolerated, and no longer considered "evil." Let's make sure we reach "common ground" – a place of reason.