

 **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**
74 SCHOOL SHOOTINGS SINCE SANDY HOOK? IS THAT POSSIBLE?



By Stephen L. Bakke  June 15, 2014

Here's what provoked me:

In recent days we have been hearing that "there has been an average of one school shooting per week" since Sandy Hook in 2012 - a total of 74. That statistic was proclaimed by former New York Mayor Bloomberg's anti-gun group, "Everytown for Gun Safety." The total sounded high but I didn't question it seriously until I read a short reference to apparent contradiction of that statistic by CNN and its correspondent Jake Tapper. Then I read newspaper articles and letters to the editor using the "Everytown" report as sure proof of the nature of the problem.

I dug into this a little bit and found that true "Newtown/Sandy Hook type" shootings actually numbered 15, according to CNN. The other 59 were incidents of violence, but of a different nature - even spousal disputes. This is a distinction that DOES make a difference because what we are really after is a solution to this awful problem. If we want a successful solution, we need to make sure we are attacking the right problem! We won't eliminate the problem present at Sandy Hook if we are distracted by incidents of gang violence.

Here's my response:

74 School Shootings since Sandy Hook? Is That Possible?

Outcry about "one shooting per week" proclaimed by the "Everytown for Gun Safety" report is understandable. It stated that since the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in Newtown, Connecticut, there has been an average of 1.37 school shootings for each school week. One commentator described this as: "More acts of domestic terrorism aided and abetted by the NRA."

"Everytown..." is an anti-gun activist group founded by former New York Mayor Bloomberg. The outcry is an example of stifled, yet almost giddy enthusiasm from certain elements strongly opposed to firearms of any kind. I suggest they stifle their giggles!

I desperately want to end gun violence, but I know this reaction sets our efforts back. Apparently, so does CNN! The network analyzed all 74 examples cited and determined there were only 15 "Newtown-like" incidents in the lot. This is shocking on its own! No need for distortion! CNN also featured a study by criminology professor James Alan Fox who compiled data of mass shootings from 1976 to 2012. There is no general trend upward according to his data. Fox told CNN's Jake Tapper that **people should take Bill Clinton's advice to look at trend lines rather than headlines.**

The other incidents in the "74" involve types of violence unlike "Newtown." Domestic arguments, gangs, accidents, arguments, etc. are horrific! This is a distinction WITH a difference. If we want success solving this horrible problem, **we'd better make sure we're attacking the right problems i.e. those defined by observed facts. Otherwise, failure is certain!**