

Why We've Had Enough

"Did you hear about the shooting down the street from your school?" My heart dropped. A waitress at my job broke the news to me that a few streets over from my school, The Met High School, another shooting took place after school hours.

I was shocked; I still am actually. Not only was this shooting more personal as it happened just down the street from me, but the 15-year-old bystander, named William Parsons, who was shot and killed, was two years my junior. Thinking of someone so young dying from senseless violence caused me to shudder. Then it hit me: His age shouldn't be what's making me shudder. Last school year numerous students died from what felt like weekly school shootings. Granted, this wasn't specifically classified as a school shooting as it happened after school hours outside of the building, but that matters very little as it still involved a young life being taken.

What should upset me is that there was a shooting, something to which I've seemingly become more accustomed. No student should go to school knowing that there is a chance they won't return home, but the sad truth is that students, parents, and news outlets have become less and less fazed by school shootings.

When I was in 6th grade I grieved with the rest of the nation over the tragic Sandy Hook Elementary School shootings. None of it made sense to me. All over the news there were images of parents and students embracing while letting their tears of sadness streak down their cheeks. It was heartbreaking that so many died from such a new threat. Everyone wanted to help the families who were affected. It was covered by the news for months.

Then more recently, the Parkland Shooting happened, and the nation was thrown for a loop again. There were marches and protests and memorials and rallies and condolences. There was the March For Our Lives rally that citizens participated in all over the country. The shooting had caused a national uproar. The news had updates on the attacks for weeks and weeks.

Then it just stopped. The same thing happened here that happened with Sandy Hook. Everyone jumps on board to help as much as they can for a certain period of time, then they just stop. Same goes for the news. I haven't heard one thing about Parkland since May.

That's how it usually goes with school shootings. The shooting happens, the nation is shaken, people demand justice, the White House promises it, then everything fizzles out.

We students aren't blind to it. I spoke with Mary Villegas, a senior at The Met High School, about whether we as a society are getting too used to gun violence. "Definitely," she said. "We've all become so numb."

Like so many others she, too, notices a pattern in how school shootings and shootings in general are handled. "[There are] prayers, public apologies, more information about the attack and then the next day everyone goes back to regular life and forgets."

With the Parkland shooting, I was with everyone else believing that it was the end of school shootings and senseless acts of gun violence plaguing our nation. But it wasn't; it was just the beginning of our

fight.

I think that's what is continuously frustrating to students everywhere. It's so obvious that we need a change in our gun laws, but Congress never delivers. I used to say, "How many shootings do we have to endure before a lightbulb goes off in peoples heads?" I stopped saying that because the majority of the people I speak to are on the same page as me, knowing that stricter gun laws are our only saving grace right now.

So why doesn't Congress obey our continuous pleas for change? I'd love to know that answer. I thought I did; it was simple to blame it on the NRA and the loads of money the government makes off of guns. However, now I don't believe that. It's not simple and it doesn't give anyone peace of mind knowing that the people who are supposed to be helping all of us out and the people who are supposed to be in charge are neglecting citizens dying just because they want to make money.

I firmly believe it's not just because of the 2nd Amendment either. That argument doesn't even come close to holding up when speaking to the majority of students. When the amendment was created, guns could only fire up to three rounds a minute — and that's if you knew what you were doing. Today guns are so powerful and dangerous some can fire 800 rounds a minute. I understand that some people feel like they need to protect themselves, but are 800 rounds a minute really necessary? Too many lives have been lost to continue this silly argument, because it's not just about which side has an age-old law to back it up, it's about which side is actually paying attention to all the signs telling us stricter gun laws are in order.

That's our reason to keep on fighting.

To continue fighting to end fear in schools, to continue fighting to end unnecessary shootings by people who shouldn't be able to buy guns in the first place, and most importantly, to continue fighting to end school shootings.

We students have a voice and we're not going to stop until what we demand is given to us. We're not going to stop until we receive peace in all schools no matter where they are or who attends them. School shootings/ shootings in general have become the new normal, but so has teens fighting for what they believe in. One of those is going to stay the new normal and the other is going to go back to being a rarity; and we'll have students to thank.