

OPINION| The United States is Suffering From a Pandemic of Assault Weapons

By Matthew McConaughey

Matthew McConaughey is a native Texan, Academy Award-winning Actor and Author.

Growing up in Texas, I have been surrounded by guns for almost all of my entire 53 years of life. Being familiar with the recreational opportunities and the self-defense aspects of guns has given me an immense appreciation for the second amendment of the Constitution. These are freedoms that I have almost always celebrated, but after seeing the impacts of a mass shooting in my hometown of Uvalde, Texas that took 19 elementary-aged childrens' lives and the lives of two teachers, I now support the ban on assault weapons in the United States.

A common misconception that many people have is that banning assault weapons is the beginning of a slow and precise effort to take away the rights of millions of Americans. However, the ban on assault weapons will protect the freedoms that so many Americans and myself love. Without the sale of assault weapons, Americans will not have to be actively looking for the best exit in a movie theater, whether or not it is safe to go to church or what could happen to their child while they are away at school. The lives of thousands could be spared.

For general gun-related deaths, according to [Everytown for Gun Safety](#), every year there are roughly 40,620 people killed and 76,385 people injured by guns in the United States. Internationally, we are leading the developed world in gun violence-related deaths. Additionally, [World Population Review](#), found that this year the United Kingdom has a rate of .24 for gun-related deaths per 100,000 people; whereas, the United States has a rate of 10.95 per 100,000 people. Our country is experiencing a pandemic like no other, in which assault weapons are the illness and killing thousands, but few are trying to find the cure.

With assault weapons, the evidence gets even more disturbing. One of the common denominators for the most prominent mass shootings in America is the AR-15. Used in Sandy Hook, Parkland, Pulse NightClub, Las Vegas and Sutherland Springs, the AR-15 has become an essential part of the nightmare that is mass shootings. Most AR-style rifles come prepared with magazines that can hold anywhere from 10-30 bullets, which allows mass shooters to kill with deadly efficiency.

I have long been a supporter of the second amendment, and I believe there is a difference between supporting reasonable regulation and the elimination of the right to bear arms.

As an American, I am tired of hearing politicians send their “thoughts and prayers” to the tormented loved ones of those who have been killed by assault rifles. It is obvious that more people can be killed with an assault rifle than with a pistol. Let us save the lives of thousands by outlawing assault-style weapons and put an end to the senseless murders that have plagued our society and wake up from this nightmare.