Stop Treating Mass Shootings Like Hurricanes

<https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/02/opinions/texas-shooting-hurricane-different-threats-campbell/index.html>

**Opinion by**[**Josh Campbell**](https://www.cnn.com/profiles/josh-campbell)

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**(CNN)**"If you look at the numbers, we're looking at an active shooter every other week in this country," [said Christopher Combs](https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/01/us/fbi-frustrations-mass-shootings/index.html), the lead FBI agent in charge of federal resources assisting in the investigation of Saturday's deadly mass shooting in Texas.

His chilling comments about the state of violence in America come after [seven people were killed](https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/01/us/odessa-texas-shooting-sunday/index.html) and at least 22 injured when a gunman opened fire with an AR-type assault rifle along a West Texas stretch of highway.

Much remains unknown about the 36-year-old shooter -- law enforcement sources tell me authorities [have yet to establish](https://www.cnn.com/2019/09/02/us/west-texas-shooting-monday/index.html) a motive -- but the latest incident follows a recent cycle of carnage in this country.

Mass murder in America is now predictable, and each incident follows a pattern you can set your watch to: a shooter guns down innocents, family and friends bury their loved ones, communities grieve, many politicians offer empty thoughts and prayers, little to no legislative action is taken -- and people move on until the next one.

With the Texas shooting happening at the same time a powerful Category 5 hurricane approaches the eastern United States, it occurs to me that our response to gun violence in the modern era isn't that different from how we prepare for violent storms.

When facing a threat, the first question we ask is, what power do we have over it? With a hurricane, we naturally resign ourselves to the fact the only thing one can do is prepare for the worst and try to flee from danger. You can't stop a hurricane -- only try to limit its impact. The annual hurricane season will never go away.

This seems to be the same fatalistic approach we now employ when dealing with mass murder. We want to stop them, but feel powerless. Like hurricanes, it feels as though mass shootings are here to stay.

Of course, this method of viewing gun violence is fatally flawed. Unlike natural disasters, and contrary to what politicians and the gun lobby [might tell us](https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/08/politics/trump-nra-wayne-lapierre-guns-background-checks/index.html), there are things we can do to stop this cycle of mass murder that is inflicting our country.

There are a [host of solutions](https://everytownresearch.org/reports/keeping-schools-safe-plan-stop-mass-shootings-end-gun-violence-american-schools/?source=mdmo_Resource&refcode=mdmo_Resource&utm_source=mdmo_Resource&utm_medium=o&utm_campaign=Resource)large and small that could help reduce gun violence, if only the issue of guns wasn't so politically divisive.

For instance, lawmakers actively limiting access to weapons of war could help rid our streets of the kind of assault rifle that shows up time and again at scenes of mass violence. Furthermore, strengthening background checks and enacting so-called ["red flag" laws](https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/05/politics/red-flag-gun-law-explainer-donald-trump/index.html) would help authorities get guns out of the hands of potentially dangerous people before they strike.

If elected leaders were serious about saving lives, they would come together in a bipartisan manner and take the issue head-on in a way that would balance public safety with the constitutional right to bear arms.

Until then, their lack of action will continue to signal to our fellow citizens that politicians in power consent to an acceptable level of bloodshed. By doing nothing, they are in effect telling us this violent status quo is okay in their eyes.

And until they act, we as a nation will remain on this murderous merry-go-round that just won't stop. We will continue to wake up to news that more of our fellow citizens have been cut down at the hand of a gunman.

And mass shootings will continue to seem as common as bad weather.