

The following has been provided by General Peter Chiarelli as background for his argument about the “gun control” debate at next Wednesday’s Seattle Rotary luncheon.

- **With freedom comes responsibility.** This applies to our freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and certainly to our right to bear arms. I am a voice for responsible solutions that help keep guns out of the wrong hands and prevent senseless tragedies.
- **America’s gun violence crisis is not normal—and it’s not inevitable.** Americans are 25 times more likely to be killed by a gun than people in other developed nations. In fact, no other country like ours comes close. Over 125,000 people are shot each year, almost 34,000 of those fatally. This level of gun violence is unacceptable.
- **This is an epidemic that needs to be addressed.** I believe there is much Congress can do to reduce gun violence without violating the Second Amendment -- which I explicitly support. We must pass laws that keep guns out of the hands of individuals who are a danger to themselves or others. Laws like extreme risk protection orders, which allow family and household members and law enforcement to temporarily prevent people in crisis from accessing a gun, and universal background checks can make both individuals in crisis and communities safer. And we’ve got to get serious about researching gun violence in this country so we can better address what’s happening in this country. The American people overwhelmingly support these policies.
- **No one gun law will prevent every shooting, but there are solutions that will reduce gun violence and save lives.** We know there are policies that will make our communities safer, like universal background checks and prohibiting dangerous people—like domestic abusers and terrorists—from accessing guns. In states that require a background check on every handgun sale, 47% fewer women are shot to death by their intimate partners, 53% fewer law enforcement officers are shot to death, and there are 53% fewer suicides. Gun laws save lives.
- **The vast majority of Americans support gun violence prevention policies.** Americans are in agreement that it’s time to pass policies that will reduce gun violence. 97 percent of Americans, including 97 percent of Americans in gun owning households, support universal background checks.
- **A gun safety majority has come to Congress.** Millions of voters—young and old, Democrat and Republican, urban and suburban—rallied for stronger gun laws this year, and in November they elected candidates who support them. The House majority is now in lockstep with the vast majority of the American people in the belief that our schools, our churches, our places of work, our streets should be safe from gun violence.
- **We know how to solve this problem. It’s time to demand action.** Our leaders can protect our kids in their classrooms and families in their communities - but to do that, we must all acknowledge America’s gun violence problem and work toward solutions. We need elected leaders at every level of government who will look at the research and act to save lives.