



2-3-2014

Are Some Rights Wrong?

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Fenrich, Megan A., "Are Some Rights Wrong?" (2014). *SURGE*. 37.
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Are Some Rights Wrong?

Abstract

"When the time came, I did it. I had to." – Seung-Hui Cho

Even though it's been more than six years since April 16, 2007, I still find myself watching the YouTube videos and glimpsing the pictures my parents tried so hard to conceal me from. Words dripping with hatred, guns and other weapons pointed at the viewer. I can understand why my parents didn't want a seventh grader to view these. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Surge, Surge Gettysburg, Gettysburg College, Center for Public Service, school violence, Virginia Tech, gun control, Second Amendment

Disciplines

Education | Peace and Conflict Studies | Second Amendment

Comments

Surge is a student blog at [Gettysburg College](#) where systemic issues of justice matter. Posts are originally published at [surgegettysburg.wordpress.com](#) Through stories and reflection, these blog entries relate personal experiences to larger issues of equity, demonstrating that –isms are structural problems, not actions defined by individual prejudice. We intend to popularize justice, helping each other to recognize our biases and unlearn the untruths.

SURGE

[VERB] : to move suddenly or powerfully forward or upward

ARE SOME RIGHTS WRONG?

February 3, 2014

"When the time came, I did it. I had to." – Seung-Hui Cho

Even though it's been more than six years since April 16, 2007, I still find myself watching the YouTube videos and glimpsing the pictures my parents tried so hard to conceal me from. Words dripping with hatred, guns and other weapons pointed at the viewer. I can understand why my parents didn't want a seventh grader to view these.



For most people, April 16 is a date like any other. The world has moved on, into greater tragedies and staggering political debates that never amount to much. But for over 40,000 people, this day is filled with remembrance and the colors orange and maroon.

For me, it is hard not to remember the day of the Virginia Tech massacre. After all, I hid in a dusty middle school gym for roughly four hours with no knowledge of what was happening and no way of contacting my family members. It is hard not to remember the snowflakes, the basketballs, the picture my friend and I drew to pass the time with a snorkeler flying in the air and a shark waiting underwater for him, the laughs and jokes we made about the lockdown, and, when we got home, the frantic call from my aunt asking if my father was alright, tears clouding up her voice. I still didn't know why, either.

It seems that gun violence has come into the forefront of our society ever since April 16. It is featured on the news everyday, stories of kids finding guns in their house, the gun going off, or stories of those like Seung-Hui Cho who use guns to make a statement in some way.

And it seems as if the government has done nothing in response to these things.

I do not presume to know the varying opinions and views on the gun control debate. What I do know only covers a small fraction of the debate going on: that some [argue for more restrictions](#) on the amount and type of assault weapons available to the public while others [argue there are enough restrictions](#) already. In all honesty, I usually change the channel when news of it comes on TV because I constantly feel like nothing is changing; instead, there are only accusations, statistics, debates being thrown around up on Capitol Hill. Some people argue that tragedies like Virginia Tech or Newtown are evidence that our country needs much stricter gun control. On the

other hand, I know people from Blacksburg, present during the massacre, who want to own a gun; they want that security and protection. It's their right, as granted by the Second Amendment in the Bill of Rights.

But isn't it also my right to feel safe? Is that not granted to me, a law-abiding American citizen, within the Constitution? And to me, safety means stricter regulation on guns. It is my right to feel safe as a citizen. And stricter gun control with no concealed weapons, better background checks, a shorter list of guns that can be owned in the US, and, in light of the Virginia Tech massacre, a ban of ownership for those with a history of mental illness is my way of feeling safe. Some of you might think that's asking too much but until you're in a situation where three people you know die within the same hour from the same gun in the same place, you might understand.

The worst part of all, for me, was afterwards, after I had learned what happened and my father told me to shut off the television, turn off the radio, disregard the newspaper. I learned that the mother of my best friend, whom I was joking with in the gym, had been killed. And even though I wasn't on campus, I still felt guilty because while I was laughing with her daughter, she was dying.

And, as a naive kid, I thought for several years afterwards that maybe if we hadn't been laughing, her mother would have lived.

Sometimes I still think if we were more serious, her mother would have lived.

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Editor

<http://surgegettyburg.wordpress.com/2014/02/03/dont-shoot-down-my-right-to-feel-safe/>