

Dear Governor Nikki R. Haley,

Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this, I'm sure you are very busy. My name is Joshua Lee Hicks, I am a writer and certified firearms instructor from Boone, North Carolina. I have a weekly firearms column in The Loafer Magazine out of Johnson City Tennessee. I just wrote a piece on firearms legislation, and the steps that I believe will truly eradicate mass shootings. I was compelled to write this article after watching President Obama's speech following the mass shooting at Umpqua Community College

I think he hit the nail on the head when he said that he needs the cooperation of the state legislatures to affect any real change. I also agree that law-abiding, trained citizens like myself have nothing to fear from background checks, I mention in my article the need for mental health screenings as well, seeing as how the last three shooters had no prior convictions they would not have been flagged in a background check. I am in no way suggesting disarmament, in fact I think we need more trained, law abiding citizens to be armed. I think the final step, once all the others in my article have been met is to lift the restriction for carrying on educational property. As I'm sure you've noticed Governor, schools keep being targeted. This is because the shooters know there will be no armed opposition there. Imagine with me if you will that there were an average of one trained armed citizen per classroom, office, store, etc. Not just in your State, but throughout the country. There would be no successful mass shootings because the shooter would be taken down almost instantly. The shooter would know this and with no prospect of success might even be dissuaded from attempting it altogether.

I know you might not agree with me, but as I mention in my article that is the beauty of this great nation we live in, two people can have opposing views but still work together for a common goal, which we can both agree is to end mass shootings once and for all.

I am including a copy of my article with this letter, I don't pretend to have all the answers, but I truly believe the steps outlined in the article can and will eradicate mass shootings. I would love to see that as part of your legacy as Governor.

I know mine is a small voice in a roar of voices, but I pray it will be heard. I am sending a copy of my article and a letter to President Obama, and the Governors of all 50 States as well as the US Territories of Guam, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands and American Samoa. I am doing this in hopes that we can set aside our differences, and party lines long enough to do what is necessary to ensure a swift end to mass firearms violence. I hope you enjoy the article, and have a blessed day!

Best Wishes,

Joshua Lee Hicks

10/20/2015

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Josh Lee Hicks", written in a cursive style.

LOCK, STOCK & BARREL

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Gun Control Legislation

There has been a lot of talk lately about gun control, especially in the realm of politics. This is due primarily to all the mass shootings that have taken place over the last few years. The fact of the matter is that these shootings are atrocious and there is always a public outcry in their wake. It is easy to get swept up in this outcry and get confused. You see the outcry is not truly for stricter gun laws, but for changes to be made to prevent any more mass shootings. Politicians tend take advantage of that outcry, twisting it to meet their own agendas.

When law abiding firearms owners hear the words "Gun Control" it sends up all kinds of red flags, they start quoting the Second Amendment. Likewise when anti-gun people hear the words "Gun Rights" it likewise sends up red flags and they start quoting firearms violence statistics. However neither side proposes a solution to the real problems, the root of the debate, which are mass shootings. The quote "The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again expecting a different result" comes to mind. Despite your opinion of President Obama, he did bring up some valid points in his speech following the Umpqua Community College shooting. He pointed out that the United States is the only advanced country in the world to have mass shootings, not to say other countries don't suffer from firearms related violence. However, the FBI defines a mass shooting as four or more random fatalities associated with a firearm.

Disarmament is non-conducive with the US Constitution, and is therefore not a valid option, so what can be done to prevent mass shootings? A series of things must

happen, some of which you are likely to disagree with depending on which of the before-mentioned camps you belong to. First there needs to be unilateral interstate firearms purchasing legislation, meaning that a Texas and a Tennessee resident must both follow the same steps to purchase a firearm. Furthermore private sales must be regulated (You might have just thrown your copy of The Loafer across the room, please let me explain.). Private sales, like public sales, should be subject to permit/background check requirements. If you're thinking a background check wouldn't have flagged the last three mass shooters you are correct, none of them had prior convictions. This ushers in step two, psychological screenings as part of the permitting process. Each Sheriff's Office would have a licensed psychologist on staff to evaluate each applicant. They should, at least in theory, pick up on any homicidal cues and decline the permit. The third step is to require a standard training program as part of the application process, nothing crazy like a week-long excursion, but something like a four-hour basic safety and fundamentals class. The fourth step is to encourage citizens to get trained and carry, if an average of one law-abiding, trained citizen per classroom, or office, store etc were to be armed there would be no successful mass shootings because the threat would be stopped almost immediately, imagine if that number was three instead of one! The fifth step is to stop immortalizing mass shooters, some of these shooters are just glory seekers and want to "go out with a bang" but if they know their name will not be mentioned and no one will know who they were, they might not

be motivated to commit the mass shooting. The last step, once all the other steps have been completed, would be to alter the law to allow universal carry, meaning that with the exception of private property whose owners prohibit carry, law enforcement facilities, and government buildings, a trained, law-abiding citizen can carry anywhere. This would include educational property, imagine if such an armed citizen had been at Columbine, Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook, and Umpqua?

You might disagree with these steps; you might even have some ideas of your own. The great thing about living in this country is that we have a voice. Write your congressman and tell them your ideas, if you like mine feel free to forward them this article. Remember the definition of insanity is to do the same thing over and over expecting a different result, break the cycle and let your voice be heard. As always I hope you enjoyed this article and if you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me. I look forward to your feedback.