

60 is a common speed limit for freeways in many U.S. states.

Babe Ruth hit 60 home runs in 1927.

The 60's is when we began a new fight for racial equality.

And every 60 hours gunfire echoes through the halls of a school in the United States.

I never would have thought, waking up on January 16th, that my school would become a statistic. Around 9:45 I entered my classroom, expecting to spend 15 minutes conferencing with my teacher. Instead I stayed in that small yellow room huddled in the corner on the floor for over two hours. When the announcement was first made to go into lockdown, we thought it was a drill, so no one was that nervous. We were told very little, but as the minutes ticked by, information was gathered. Friends texting friends and rumors spreading. There were police cars blocking the entrances. A bank in town had been robbed at gunpoint. We continued to work-- thinking it would be over soon. Slowly, the truth seeped into my classroom.

There were nine kids and one teacher in that room, all frantically trying to sort truth from lies. It was so scary to me-- the fact that even my teacher didn't know what was true and what wasn't. After 45 minutes, an announcement from our principal came over the loudspeaker saying that there was an armed person on our soccer field. The whole west wing of the school, the side nearest to the individual, was sent to the auditorium. I continued to be locked down in a classroom. This is when I emailed my parents. They reassured me, but even through the emails, I could tell they were worried. We all were. At 11:00 they shot him. We heard the echoes of every one of those gunshots. They say he was waving around a gun, threatening to kill himself. Instead nine officers shot him to death. Throughout the rest of the day, I learned more and more information. This man had been our kindergarten teacher's son. He died that afternoon. And "every 60 hours" had just become my reality.

We were the lucky ones. The ones who walked away alive. Last week, my peers in Florida gave their lives *just for going to school*. Closer to home, my peers in Rutland were slated to die. Please do not underestimate the impact this fear and uncertainty have on every family in Vermont. If people were coming into federal and state buildings and attempting to shoot adults every 60 hours, I bet you would have put your foot down and done something. Why is it different when the children of your community have this ever present threat hanging over them? I support each of these gun bills because this is what our future needs. Isn't a child's safety more important than owning a semi-automatic weapon? Isn't our safety more important than the convenience of somebody who wants to buy a gun without the hassle of a background check?