

Last week, President Obama unveiled a plan that he said would protect America's children and communities by reducing gun violence.

A month after the horrific and senseless attack that took 26 innocent lives at a Connecticut elementary school, Americans expect the president and Congress to work together on a comprehensive and effective strategy to end such nightmares. Yet, the president's proposal leads us in the opposite direction, dividing the country and falling short of providing meaningful protection for our children.

The tragedy of Sandy Hook has brought to light flaws in the decades-old gun control policies of the left, which President Obama merely dusted off and repackaged as his new plan. A list of largely feel-good proposals that merely burden law-abiding citizens, his strategy is to further limit gun ownership. Had his gun control policy been federal law on December 14, 2012, it is unlikely that any lives would have been spared in Newtown.

As we all know by now, the shooter in Connecticut was a mentally disturbed young man who gained access to guns from his mother – a legal gun owner – not through a gun show or over the counter purchase. Connecticut already has tough gun laws on the books and they did nothing to stop the horror of that day. The president himself admitted that no legislation can stop every act of violence, yet his policy simply builds on the disproven assumption that restricting legal gun ownership will end senseless violence.

Statistics released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation show that more murders are committed each year by knives and blunt objects than rifles – the target of president's new gun ban. From 2007 to 2011, nearly three times as many homicides were reported from the use of one's hands, fists and feet than rifles.

Restricting the rights of the law-abiding public will not stop criminals from using guns to commit crimes, nor will it prevent evil attacks on the public. In addition to being unconstitutional, gun control taken to its extreme – as many on the left would ultimately like to see – fails miserably at deterring violent crime. The city of Chicago, which has some of the toughest gun laws in the country, also experienced the highest number of gun homicides in America last year – over 500. Washington D.C., where a gun ban had been in effect for many years, has also seen periods of high gun violence.

There is a reason that the framers of the constitution placed the right of gun ownership up high in the Bill of Rights, second only to the protections of free speech and religion. James Madison was not thinking about preserving hunting rights. He and the other supporters of the Bill of Rights wanted to guarantee Americans' ability to protect their freedoms as well as themselves.

No rush to pass politically motivated gun control legislation can outweigh the supremacy of the U.S. Constitution and the Second Amendment. Nor can the government take away the public's right to protect itself. In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled in *District of Columbia vs. Heller* that "the inherent right of self-defense has been central to the Second Amendment right."

I am opposed to the president's gun ban and am disappointed that he chose to pursue a political course rather than sitting down with Congress to work on a comprehensive solution to violence in our country. However, I remain committed to working in Congress to address the causes of such senseless crimes at their source – the individual.

We must not allow the president's attempts to institute further gun control deter us from finding ways to protect our schools and the public from violence.

Supporting the Victims of Hurricane Sandy:

Last week, the House passed \$50.7 billion in emergency aid for the victims of Hurricane Sandy in the northeast. I supported this disaster aid after the House largely stripped the extra spending and unrelated policy provisions that had been placed there by the U.S. Senate.

Along the Alabama Gulf Coast, we are, unfortunately, all too familiar with the unpredictable wrath of Mother Nature – most recently through hurricanes Ivan and Katrina.

We, too, have relied upon the federal government to help rebuild our communities, and it is likely we will be looking to Uncle Sam for help in the future. Whether along the Gulf coast or the Atlantic coast, we are all Americans and we must be willing to help each other in time of

disaster.

My staff and I work for you. If I can ever be of service, please do not hesitate to call my office toll free at 1-800-288-8721.

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