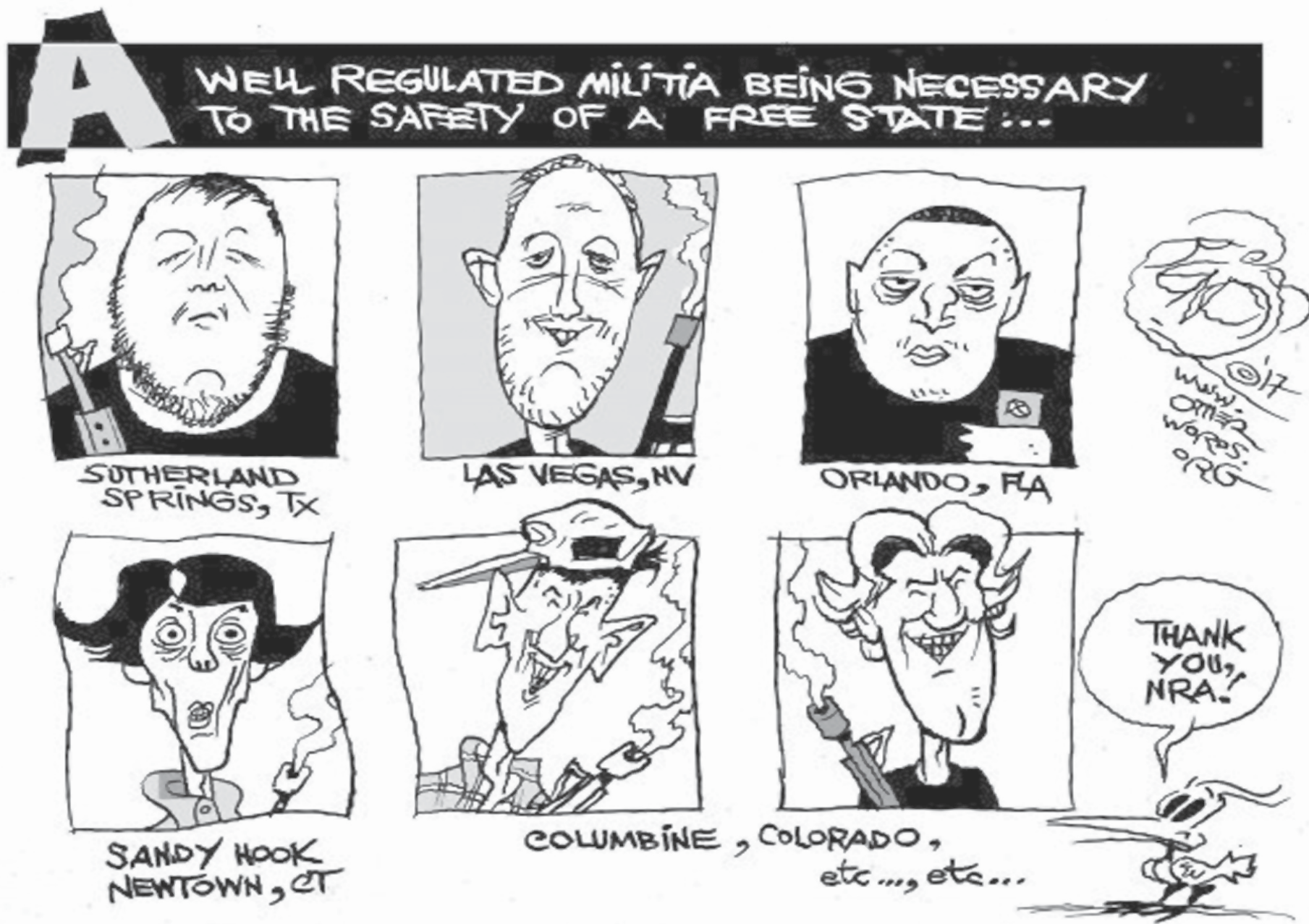


Opinion articles do not necessarily represent the views of the Portland Observer. We welcome reader essays, photos and story ideas. Submit to [news@portlandobserver.com](mailto:news@portlandobserver.com).

# OPINION



## Preventing Gun Deaths and Protecting Gun Rights

### Gun control shouldn't be this hard

BY JILL RICHARDSON



Before the gun lobby or its sycophants in Congress bring out their usual talking points for why we can't ever have common sense gun reform, I'd like to shoot one of them down. No pun intended.

We just saw what happens when a bad guy with a gun is met by a good guy with a gun. In Sutherland Springs, Texas, when a mass shooter attacked churchgoers, he was eventually confronted by another armed civilian.

But before the good guy got there with his gun, 26 people were fatally wounded.

I've already heard discussions about fixing the problem by having more people bring guns to church, as the attorney general of Texas recently suggested.

What about other ways to prevent gun deaths? How about any solution other than "more guns"?

Every time I hear discussions about one reform or another — universal background checks, banning high capacity magazines, banning assault rifles, etc. — I hear the exact same talking point: Criminals can get around those rules.

You could ban assault rifles, or the high capacity magazines that allow people intent on mass murder to shoot more bullets before they need to stop to reload. Perhaps some criminals would just get them illegally.

Not all mass shootings could have been prevented by background checks. For example, the Sandy Hook shooter stole guns from his mother, who legally acquired them. Background checks wouldn't have stopped him.

Here's the thing: These hypothetical arguments don't need to be hypothetical. We can study them and make an informed choice.

Which reforms will simultaneously preserve freedom for hunters, gun enthusiasts, and other law abiding citizens who want to own

firearms while also keeping guns out of the hands of criminals?

If there's any will at all to reduce the death toll from guns in this country — more than 33,000 deaths a year — no doubt the country that sent a man to the moon can figure out how to do it without violating citizens' rights.

Furthermore, just because a law may not prevent all shootings doesn't mean it won't prevent some shootings.

I've even heard a gun advocate say that regulation won't work because it would only stop people who are too stupid to get around them from obtaining a gun.

You know what? That sounds good to me. If we can prevent every single shooting perpetrated by a stupid person, I'm for it. That's still fewer people dying overall. It won't get us down to zero, but refusing to do anything just because it's a partial solution is ridiculous.

Each little bit of progress we make is a human life saved. It's an entire family whose lives aren't torn apart and changed forever. It's two fewer grieving parents and four fewer grieving grandpar-

ents. It's more children who grow up with their parents alive.

I don't have a stake in which method we use to reduce gun violence so long as we pick something that works. It would be nice if law-abiding gun enthusiasts would help.

So let's actually look at the data to find out how it can best be done. In fact, let's lift the congressional

ban that's prevented the Centers for Disease Control from examining a lot of that data for the last 20 years.

Preferably before another year passes and another 33,000 Americans are dead. *OtherWords* columnist Jill Richardson is the author of *Recipe for America: Why Our Food System Is Broken and What We Can Do to Fix It*. Distributed by *OtherWords.org*.

**PLATINUM  
FADE & SALON**

**5010 NE 9th Ave  
Portland, Or 97211  
Phone: 503 284-2989**

*We specialize in a variety of cuts for men and women, hot towel razor shaves, braiding, hair extension, Shampoo, blow dryer and Platinum fade.*

**Call Today or Walk in !!!**