

Saturday's tragic events have once again brought our attention to the role of guns in our society. Unlike the weeks and months following similar senseless tragedies at Columbine High School, Virginia Tech, and Wedgewood Baptist Church, we cannot avoid this discussion. From 1999-2010, there were 251 attacks committed with guns at places of worship- the holiest and most peaceful buildings in our land. From 2005-2009, the Congressional Research Services estimates there were 41,037 murders committed with handguns in the United States. These numbers are staggering. We must make our country safe from those who would use guns to attack and kill other human beings.

In our discussion simple questions must be answered. Is the right to bear arms more important than the right to safely go to the grocery store? Does it trump the right to walk down the street? Does it exceed the right to peacefully gather at a place of worship? Is it the individual's responsibility to escape a bullet, or should we do all we can as a nation to prevent dangerous individuals from easily accessing guns and firing shots?

Guns are a powerful weapon with the potential to take life. We must learn from the tragic events of Saturday and craft legislation that is guided by a simple principle- to keep our nation from ever going through a tragedy like this again. For those who have died in Tucson, and the thousands whose lives have been ended by guns, we must legislate to fix a broken system of laws and prevent future murders.