



## I left the gun control movement when they came after people like me

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The Las Vegas attack that took the lives of 59 people and wounded hundreds of others immediately spurred another round of liberals calling for gun control. As a Muslim American who has been staunchly liberal most my life, I agreed with them after most mass shootings.

But this time, I find myself on the other side of the aisle.

Only 16 months ago after the tragic shooting at the Pulse nightclub in Orlando, congressional Democrats staged a sit-in to demand that Speaker of the House Paul Ryan call for a vote on gun control. More specifically, Democrats wanted to ban gun sales to those who were on the no-fly list.

My major problem with that kind of legislation? The no-fly list was created by the government to track individuals who were suspected of terrorism, *not* convicted. If this law passed, it would have completely subverted the right to due process and restricted one's right to own a firearm without any convictions in their name. And despite voting overwhelmingly in favor of Democrats, this type of legislation would hurt Muslim Americans the most.

My name is not on a terrorist watch list, nor have I ever been subject to much scrutiny by the TSA or the Department of Homeland Security while traveling in an airport. However, my father, an American Muslim who was born in Pakistan, has been detained multiple times while traveling back and forth to perform heart surgery on those who badly needed it. Since watch lists are created by the government, what's to stop them from arbitrarily adding my name or any of my relatives to the list? My rights could be restricted if the Democrats had their way.

On top of all this, Democrats and liberals seem to push policies on guns that actually do very little to stop the mass shooting that immediately preceded the proposal.

Orlando shooter, Omar Mateen, who pledged allegiance to the Islamic State prior to opening fire on the Pulse nightclub, was not on a no-fly list.

The San Bernardino couple that killed 14 and wounded 21 at a holiday office party obtained their weapons through a longtime friend and former neighbor, Enrique Marquez, and were not on the radar of local law enforcement or the FBI.

Newtown shooter Adam Lanza obtained his guns by stealing them from his mother, who he shot and killed. He then entered Sandy Hook Elementary School where he shot and killed 20 children and six adult staff members.

With respect to Las Vegas, Stephen Paddock reportedly bought 33 guns in the past year, but some purchases date back more than 20 years. The investigation is starting to reveal the meticulous planning that Paddock went through to carry out his attack, and the lack of any gun control proposal that would stop him from doing so.

These are all horrifying shootings, but the problem is that we're trying to legislate ourselves out of a cultural problem.

A researcher from FiveThirtyEight found that the more she analyzed the 33,000 people who die each year from guns, the more she realized that sweeping gun control legislation wouldn't prevent mass shootings. Two-thirds of gun deaths happen from suicide, while one in five deaths happen to 15-to-34-year-old men through gang violence or other street incidents. About 1,700 women die from gun incidents each year perpetrated through domestic violence.

And if gun control measures were passed, they would actually hurt African Americans and poor people the most. According to Adam Bates from the Cato Institute, nearly half of the prison inmates serving sentences for gun-related charges are black.

We're at a point in our society where it's so easy to dehumanize others to the point where violence is deemed acceptable in the minds of many. We can't talk to each other about complex issues without yelling at or assaulting the other side. Gun control won't get us to love each other as human beings. All of us need to do better.