



# Shooting at the Ball Park: Here We Go Again

By Audrey D. Kline

It seems it never takes long for gun control advocates to shout from the proverbial mountain tops following a shooting. Within only a few hours of the recent shooting at a ballfield in Alexandria, VA, media outlets were filled with renewed calls for gun control from Democrats and journalists, and [social media](#) was peppered with vitriolic comments aimed at both sides of the aisle. Some saw the shooting as an opportunity to express the shooting as 'revenge' for President Trump's rolling back of the Affordable Care Act or their general hatred of Republicans (much like the shooter), while others simply stuck to the gun control issue.

The unfortunate reality is that gun control laws do not prevent shootings. This latest episode of the shooting of Rep. Steve Scalise and others present at the baseball practice in Alexandria, VA is evidence of just that. The perpetrator of the crime was a resident of Illinois. Illinois has some of the most restrictive gun control laws in the United States. The shooter used a SKS semi-automatic rifle, and had a lengthy [criminal record](#) of over 30 cases since 1989. He held legal permits for both rifles and handguns.

Economist John [Lott](#) pointed out on the afternoon of the shooting that calls for gun control were flying before the facts were even known. What was known was that two Capitol police officers, eventually aided by Alexandria Police, took down the shooter, engaging in a gun fight with only their service handguns. Senator [Rand Paul](#) noted that had it not been for Steve Scalise, there would not have been any police presence and they'd likely all have been shot. It took good guys with guns to stop the shooter, something that some of the most restrictive gun control laws in the country could not do. To that end, the day after the shooting, Rep. Tom [Massie](#) (R-Kentucky)

announced he would introduce legislation to allow reciprocity of out of state concealed carry permits in Washington, D.C. to allow people legally licensed in their home state to protect themselves.

It's time to consider more broadly how to keep oneself safe. Relying on laws that promote various types of prohibitions probably isn't the safest bet. There are countless examples today of the failures of prohibition—from gun control to the opioid crisis. [Lott](#) has pointed out that places that ban guns see a rise in murder rates. Today, one only need look at major metropolitan areas across the U.S. to see the continued rise in the murder rates in various cities, some you might expect, and some you might not—Chicago, St. Louis, San Antonio, Phoenix, and close to where I live, in Louisville, the murder rate climbed 44 percent last year. Chicago saw a staggering 59 percent increase in its murder rate in 2016. Six cities set records for the most murders in one year<sup>1</sup>. These shootings are typically not carried out by legally permitted gun owners. More gun control laws won't stop the shootings either. Despite the scary statistics, the overall murder rate in the U.S. remains lower than it was in the 1980s and 1990s. This is notable since gun ownership has been at an all-time high.

[Video](#) of the shooting, captured by Noah Nathan while walking his dogs, goes on for over five agonizing minutes (caution for language in the video). It is worth the watch and listen for a few reasons. First, the video will help you know what gun fire sounds like if you don't already. Nathan reported he initially thought he was hearing fireworks, which is a common reaction. Second, the video shows just how exposed people are when carrying out normal, every-day activities. The inability to protect oneself due to restrictive regulations would leave the innocent at the mercy of the evil in society. On the contrary, a good guy (or gal) with a gun can do wonders to save others. In this case, thankfully, that is exactly what happened. The group out on the field wouldn't have stood a chance at self-defense with their only weapons being baseball bats. Similarly, two good guys with guns captured two dangerous [fugitives](#) who were on the run after escaping from prison and killing two prison guards. The fugitives were held at gunpoint by the two neighbors when they were discovered trying to steal his vehicle. At the end of the day, there is no amount of regulation that will prevent evil. However, a good guy with a gun can prevent tragedy.



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<sup>1</sup> Asher, Jeff, "U.S. Cities Experienced Another Big Rise in Murder in 2016," <https://fivethirtyeight.com> (January 9, 2017).