**A Paradoxical Message**

There is a political narrative being espoused by conservative politicians this election cycle which is “Pro-Life and Pro-Gun.” It is my contention that one cannot be both. This message is both paradoxical and irresponsible in that guns are directly attributable to death not life.

According to Pew Research, in the year 2020 the United States had over 45,000 gun deaths – the most ever recorded in a single year. The CDC also found that in the same year 4300 children and teenagers died due to gun violence making this the leading cause of death in that age group. Pew Research additionally noted that there are 390 million guns owned by citizens in this country, roughly 120.5 firearms per 100 citizens. Putting this in perspective, Canada gun ownership is 34 per 100, both France and Germany have rates of 19.6 per 100 and South Africa’s is 9.7 per 100.

On May 24 we all witnessed the horror of 19 children and two adults shot in an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas. This occurred before victims of a mass shooting on May 14 in Buffalo, NY were even buried. Both of these attacks were committed by young men armed with assault style weapons. In addition to these incidents there had already been 198 mass shootings this year alone according to the Gun Violence Archive (GVA.) Last year the GVA recorded a total of 611 mass shootings.

Yet based on these data and deaths, politicians on the right still heavily promote guns in their campaign ads and websites. This can be anything from shooting guns, posing with guns or simply announcing they heavily promote gun-rights and the Second Amendment. As one can see from the information presented, being Pro-Gun is anything but Pro-Life.

 It is far beyond time for this Congress to pass meaningful and thoughtful gun control. Laws concerning issues such as universal background checks and banning the purchase of assault style weapons as well as supporting red-flag laws should be considered and passed. In fact, in another Pew Research survey in 2021, 87% of those surveyed stated that individuals with mental illness should be prevented from purchasing guns and 81% felt private guns sales and sales at gun shows should be subjected to background checks.

Even with the fact that there is a majority of citizens that favor these types of gun safety measures, conservative members of congress continually block any potential gun legislation. In fact, some states have actually made it easier to purchase and carry firearms. This lack of appropriate action has led directly to the amount of gun violence we are all witnessing. There are various reasons for the increase in acts of violence and murder yet the common denominator is the use of firearms. We can continually call on members of Congress to act, or we can vote out those blocking any firearm legislation. I call on citizens to vote out those promoting firearms and elect politicians willing to act to stem the proliferation of this ever- present gun violence in the United States.