

## Time to act. Sign the Florida petition to ban assault weapons | Opinion

By DR. GEORGE L. HANBURY II

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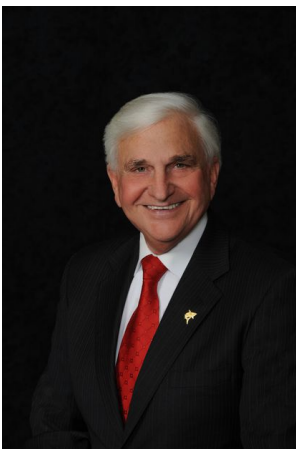


Looking at the massacre in Virginia Beach, reports showed that the suspect used extended-capacity magazines as well as a suppressor (silencer). Eliminating these items from the public would in no way reduce anyone's right to bear arms, rather it would reduce the ability of people carry out mass killings before anyone knew what was happening. We can fix this, writes Nova Southeastern University CEO and President George L. Hanbury II. (ABOVE) Brittany Perry, right, prays with Christine Craig at a makeshift memorial in June near the Virginia Beach municipal center, where earlier this year a gunman killed 12 people in a mass shooting. (Washington Post photo by Matt McClain) (The Washington Post)

Sandy Hook. Parkland. UNC Charlotte. FSU. Some of these were familiar names to you, no doubt. Sadly, they are all now forever etched into our minds.

Earlier this year — just a year after the massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida — another mass killing rocked a community dear to my heart. It took the lives of fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, friends and family members in my native state of Virginia. Since then, more carnage has ensued in Ohio, Texas and Louisiana, to name a few.

We've seen it in our schools, in our communities and in our workplaces. Gun violence in America has become so prevalent that many have become numb and callous to the news when it breaks... "another meaningless shooting," we say, before going on about our day. To that, I say: How many more prayers and sympathies will we share, when in fact, we can DO something about it. We should be asking, "What can we do to stop this from happening again?"



Nova Southeastern University  
President and Chief Executive Officer  
Dr. George L. Hanbury II. (Nova  
Southeastern University / Courtesy)

While many point to mental health problems as the key issue — and it is an important one — the better question is: Why do we have laws on the books that allow people with mental health issues access to guns to carry out mass killings? We need more assistance for this population, and more regulations to prevent them from gaining access to guns.

Polls show that a majority of Americans favor strong or moderate restrictions on firearms. Yet, time and time again these reforms fail in our state governments. You can't legislate hatred out of someone's heart, but we can take steps to both rigorously enforce the laws already on the books as well as enact new, common-sense legislation. That is why, in the absence of legislative leadership, Florida's Constitution gives us the right to bring an amendment to the voters by, and for, the voters.

Even Virginian James Madison, who *wrote* the Second Amendment, envisioned for America the creation of a *well-regulated* militia, not an unregulated one. Yet, we have become virtually unregulated, with consequences that are all too evident—and dire.

The reality is that more guns in our schools and universities will not make us safer. People often tell me that they could stop a gunman before the police arrive if they are armed. We saw in Dayton, Ohio that even with police already on the scene, too many innocent lives were ripped away from their loved ones. If someone in that establishment had a gun and was aiming at the perpetrator, how would the police know who should live or die? We may very well have lost more lives that night, or the next night, or the night after.

Looking at the massacre in Virginia Beach, reports showed that the suspect used extended-capacity magazines as well as a suppressor (silencer). Eliminating these items from the public would in no way reduce anyone's right to bear arms, rather it would reduce the ability of people carry out mass killings before anyone knew what was happening. We can fix this.

I say that it's time to save lives, not repeat that all-too-often spoken phrase... "another meaningless shooting."

I encourage you to educate yourself, as I have, on a current Florida Ban Assault Weapons NOW petition that, if passed:

"Prohibits possession of assault weapons, defined as semiautomatic rifles and shotguns capable of holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition at once, either in fixed or detachable magazine, or any other ammunition-feeding device. Possession of handguns is not prohibited. Exempts military and law enforcement personnel in their official duties. Exempts and requires registration of assault weapons lawfully possessed prior to this provision's effective date. Creates criminal penalties for violations of this amendment."

To be blunt, such weapons aren't needed for hunting, target practice or other recreational uses. We can protect our community, and this is something you can do, not just talk about. I will be signing it and I hope you do, too.

As a registered Independent, I am neither a Democrat nor a Republican, but I am a concerned citizen with the wellbeing of NSU's students, faculty, staff, visitors and the community at large in my heart and my mind.

The time is now. Take action with me and sign the [petition](#).

*Nova Southeastern University fully supports an individual's right to express their viewpoint and opinions. The views expressed in this guest editorial are that of Dr. George L. Hanbury II, President and CEO of NSU.*

Source: <https://www.sun-sentinel.com/opinion/commentary/fl-op-com-hanbury-mass-shootings-florida-petition-20191013-5o5jvsvl5frnkutjzcw2xs7ci-story.html>