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The NRA doesn't seem to get it

Pat Perriello | Jan. 18, 2013 NCR Today

Those who have been reading this blog for a while have probably figured out that I don't intend to quit pushing for saner gun laws. To me, this is a critical right-to-life issue for which all of us should stand up and demand quick action. My only disappointment is the continued failure of our own Catholic hierarchy to be as outspoken about the right to life for these young children as they are for the unborn.

The president has just signed a set of executive orders and recommended legislative actions to strengthen our gun laws. Passage will not be easy. Parents and concerned citizens will need to make known their demands and continue to apply pressure on politicians in order to achieve success. What a powerful voice the church could be as an advocate for achieving these legislative goals.

The gun lobby as represented by the National Rifle Association continues to put forth [1] the worst of what can be seen as an effort to support the rights of gun owners.

The NRA's insensitivity to the loss of young life is difficult to comprehend. Their singular focus on their rights to possess firearms as understood from the Second Amendment has made them oblivious to the obvious demands of the current situation. They seem unable to respond to the horrifying loss of life that occurred at Sandy Hook and that occurs daily in our country as a result of gun violence. Can they not see how their rights must be tempered by responsibility and by being responsive to the right to life and security for our children and all of our citizenry? Our very humanity cries out for action, yet this small segment of the population continues with old platitudes and worn-out arguments.

Let me just repeat a few facts, since the gun lobby continues to try to perpetuate myths regarding guns. They tell us that no law can prevent gun violence. Yet in country after country around the world, stronger gun laws have resulted in a dramatic reduction in gun violence. We are told that these recommended laws represent an attack on the Second Amendment. Yet none of these laws would infringe on the rights provided to citizens under the Second Amendment. In the relevant Supreme Court decision, Justice Antonin Scalia made clear that assault rifles and high-capacity magazine clips were not protected by the Second Amendment. Finally, some are saying that the president is going beyond the Constitution by signing executive orders. Yet, President Barack Obama has signed fewer executive orders than either President George W. Bush or President Bill Clinton. The orders he is signing are not even close to being controversial constitutionally.

The rhetoric is intensifying, and much of it is irrational and even hateful. It must not deter the majority of citizens who support the steps the president has proposed. Common sense demands we take these steps to make our country safer, as most other nations have already done. Despite the rhetoric of the NRA and others, the Second Amendment is safe, and no one plans to confiscate guns. We must not waver in the face of half-truths and loud voices.

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[1] http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/01/15/nra-video-obama_n_2483118.html