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## **We need to talk to each other when it comes to gun control**

by Pat Perriello

NCR Today

The Associated Press writer Steven Hurst provides important data and details about the violence plaguing our society.

The tragic story of Florena Carter and her family tugs at the heartstrings and reminds us that real people lie behind the staggering statistics. Congress, however, remains unmoved by these daily incidents of gun violence.

The statistics themselves are stark. In 2011, 8,583 people were killed because of gun violence, Hurst reports. That comes out to about 24 people per day. If you were to add those who committed suicide with guns, you would have to add an additional 19,392 gun deaths. Again, gun tragedies impact the lives of real people.

None of these realities seem to be enough to move Congress to action. Mass shootings in places like Connecticut or Colorado have had some effect. States such as Colorado, New York, Connecticut and Maryland have passed meaningful gun legislation. In Maryland, gun advocates have failed to get enough signatures to bring the new law to referendum, though the NRA still intends to challenge the law in court.

The real political divide seems to be an urban/rural chasm. In urban areas, guns have facilitated gang violence and led to far too much human tragedy. Rural areas have a history of gun ownership, which gun owners want to protect, yet there are plenty of gun suicides and gun accidents. A way needs to be devised to protect legitimate gun values in rural areas while protecting the safety of citizens in all areas of the country.

One might start with developing an understanding of the values of the other. Urban dwellers need to have a better understanding of the way of life in rural America and the role guns play in that culture. It would also be helpful if rural gun advocates could demonstrate that they felt and understood the pain and devastation too often experienced by parents who lose their children on the streets of a big city. Both sides should want to do something to address these tragedies.

As in so many instances, if we could find a way to talk with each other instead of continuing to spout each side's talking points, something could be accomplished. It is quite possible that appropriate accommodations could be found that would be acceptable to each side in the interest of making our country safer for everyone.

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