

March 1, 2023

To the Michigan House of Representatives Judiciary Committee:

What to say about gun violence to the people who need to hear it? I don't know anymore. From Columbine in 1999 to Michigan State University in 2023, what more can be said. I still reel from the gun violence experienced in our own community this last month. This is happening in all our backyards.

Inevitably with these acts of gun violence come calls for putting more guns into more people's hands. This is more a reactionary response to recover some semblance of control lost from violent acts rather than an actual, well thought out solution. These shootings occur in a matter of minutes and would not have been prevented by more people carrying firearms.

Good people have bad days. Good people have mental health crises. Good people get mad. Good people make judgment errors and bad calls. Good people conclude that a gun in hand will solve a problem or address a situation.

Sure, address mental health. That's not a problem that will ever go away. Sure, address building security and access. With each added security measure we all lose a degree of normalcy, sense of well-being, and community. Definitely stop allowing the wrong kinds of guns to get into people's hands. Don't bow to gun lobbyists who play into people's fears and paranoias. Paranoid people are dangerous people.

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We can all come up with a myriad of reasons as to how our country got to this point. The question is, how do we undo what we've become? How do we become better? Please figure it out.

My name is Lita, and I feel helpless and hopeless and have little confidence in your ability to make a difference. Prove me wrong, please.

Lita M. Jeffers