

Hannah Ahlers, a mother of three children. Jack Beaton, a husband and father of two celebrating his 23rd wedding anniversary. Candice Bowers, a mother of three who recently adopted a young child. Sandy Casey, a recently engaged special ed teacher. Jenny Parks, a young energetic kindergarten teacher. These are just a few of the 58 fatalities of the Las Vegas shooting, where almost 500 people were wounded. A shooting that used bump fire stocks to do as much damage and hurt as many people as possible.

Representatives, you have heard this plenty of times today, but the fact we're still debating this shows it must be mentioned again. According to the NY Times in October of 2017, bump fire stocks essentially turn semi automatic weapons, which are legal, into automatic ones, which are and have been illegal, and for good reason. How can we justify this? If automatic weapons were deemed dangerous enough to require a ban, then how can we rationalize allowing this glaring loophole that keeps bump fire stocks legal in place?

We have a duty to the American people, and if we negate this bill, then we will have failed that duty. While you can say that mass shooting will happen with or without bump fire stocks, they will almost certainly be less deadly than if bump fire stocks remain legal and inadequately regulated. Even if just one person was saved by the passing of this legislation, then it will certainly have been worth it. Just reading through the victims of the Las Vegas shooting is enough to affirm that. Just hearing their families speak about their loved ones killed in the shooting is enough to tell you that if even one family could have been spared that pain with the simple affirmation of a piece of legislation, it should have been done.

Now this has been overlooked for too long, but we have a chance to do something about it. While it's too late to help those in the Las Vegas shooting, we can do everything in our power to prevent another large scale attack. Even if we can't prevent it, we can try to minimize the damage, and banning bump fire stocks is an essential component of this.

It's understandable that any type of gun control, no matter how warranted, faces some backlash. After all the right to bear arms is a constitutional right and one that is fiercely protected. But it's important to remember that constitutional rights are not in fact absolute. They can and are suspended for various reasons, including public safety. Just like how your free speech is limited in that you can't yell fire in a movie theatre, it was deemed that our second amendment right deserves regulation due to the public safety risk. Banning automatic weapons in part of that regulation, and it is perfectly constitutional for bump fire stocks to follow suit. Even the National Rifle Association has supported tighter restrictions on them.

Will the affirmation of this legislation prevent any and all mass shootings? Of course not, but it will lessen the severity of some of them. To me that alone is enough to affirm this legislation. It's easy to get caught up in the politics of it, but we cannot forget the people involved. It's easy to say that a handful of lives potentially saved aren't worth everything this bill entails, until you're actually looking at that handful of people. By negating this legislation, you are essentially sentencing those people to death. By negating, you are telling the American people that you can act, can protect them, can take measures to prevent the worst of mass shootings, but that you won't.

But by affirming you are showing that every life matters, that the deaths in Las Vegas won't fade away without any change, and that we will take whatever stand we can against gun violence. So stand with me in affirmation.

