

My name is Chris Kudulis and I am a Naperville resident.

I can confidently say that not a single person in this room is OK with the current epidemic of gun violence and mass shootings. We all hear the stories about Uvalde, or closer to home, Highland Park, and are saddened by what these monsters do.

At times like this, the common refrain is "We must do something", but doing "**something**" is not the same as doing the **right** thing. There are literally thousands of gun laws at the local, state and federal level, and none of these will stop someone who has chosen to commit an act of extreme violence. But banning guns **does** create unintended consequence. It limits the ability of law-abiding citizens to defend themselves against the threat of violent criminals, who by the very definition of the word "criminal" demonstrate that they are willing to ignore or blatantly violate the law. And after laws like this are passed, without achieving the desired effect, people will want to double-down and think that they just need more laws, the banning of more weapons, the banning of weapon magazines, until lawful citizens are all but disarmed, while violent criminals will continue to use weapons to harm us. Our neighbors in Chicago live under some of the strictest gun laws in the country yet have one of the highest per capita murder rates, every year.

There is no difference between an AR15 and any other gun. The reality is that anything used to harm another person is an assault weapon. As we saw in Waukesha just a few months ago, Darrell Brooks deliberately drove his SUV into a crowd of people at a parade. He didn't need an AR15 to murder 5 people and injure 40 others.

We need to address the root causes of this violence, and the top of the list is mental health. The COVID-19 pandemic caused a radical shift away from a social society to one of forced human isolation. Researchers like Dr. Andrew Huberman (a neurobiologist and professor at Stanford) have stated unequivocally that (and I quote) "Social isolation increases anxiety and aggression...People who commit random acts of aggression are almost always socially isolated."

There has **absolutely** been an increase in violence over the last few years. But it corresponds to a crisis of mental health. A meta-analysis of 29 studies (released in August 2021) concluded that symptoms of anxiety and depression, in adolescents, has **doubled** since the start of the pandemic. And according to Mental Health America, over 60% of youth with **major** depression do not receive **any** mental health treatment. If we're going to "do something", let's address the mental health of kids who are coping with a lot of fear and very limited outlets to deal with it.

Doing "**something**" is not the answer. Doing **the right thing** can make a difference and save lives. I stand against the Assault Weapons Ban and urge you to do the same. Thank you.