

My name is Caroline and I am 15 years old. I am a youth activist for gun control.

Last year after a pep rally at my school, a student popped balloons near the microphone and loud, sharp sounds began echoing throughout the gym. My first thought was that the school was under attack, not that the noises were merely from party decorations. In my classes we spent hours over the course of the year learning about escape routes, hiding places in the classrooms, and plans should the situation ever require us to fight for our lives.

Students my age are hyper aware of the threat that guns pose to our safety. The sad truth is that we know now that our only option is to be our own advocates. For all the talking and arguing that adults do on this issue, nothing has changed. Schools are still too frequently the settings of horrible violence and the students the victims.

I have recently helped to found an organization full of youth who are furious, empowered, and passionate about making our communities safer by combatting the growing epidemic of gun violence. It is clear that we can no longer sit and wait for adults to come protect us, a fact I am reminded of every time I see a sign advertising a gun show at the fairgrounds.

Holding these shows at the Del Mar Fairground demonstrates just how careless adults have become with their own and their children's safety. Do you really think that bringing more weapons into our community makes us safer? Gun shows perpetuate a culture in which having a weapon designed for military use and capable of ending dozens of lives in seconds is normal or necessary. Let me tell you. It is not.

Rather, it is nothing less that callous and apathetic to hold these events which glorify killing machines despite San Diego's youth having shown how vehemently we oppose their ability to rip apart classrooms and families and our confidence that we are safe.

I am ashamed that this event has been allowed to continue in my community in light of all the children who have died due to the inability of adults to take decisive actions on this subject of gun control.

We are the generation that will end gun violence. When are you going to join our effort?