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When the alarm sounds in Brooklyn Rosario's third grade classroom she knows to move quickly to the wall with the smiley face and sit quietly. In the event of an armed intruder targeting the school Brooklyn and her classmates will repeat this procedure, but today they are practicing what is known as a 'Shelter in Place' drill.

Similar to fire drills, 'Shelter in Place' drills are pre-planned exercises when kindergarteners all the way up to seniors learn how to disappear under desks, take cover in a bathroom stall, use nearby objects as shields, and always know the closest emergency exit. The ABCs and Periodic table aren't the only subjects students are learning in US schools. More and more students are taught how to protect and defend themselves in the face of danger on their campus.

Brooklyn, who is eight years old, has already completed two 'Shelter in Place' drills, but doesn't believe they do enough. "I don't think it's very safe because there is nothing surrounding us. If they break into the door they will see us," she said in an interview.

Brooklyn would prefer to hide under her teacher's desk, where she feels she would be safer. "I just want shelter," she said.

Sandy Hook Elementary School, Columbine High School, the University of Virginia, Arapahoe High School, the University of Texas, and recently Marysville-Pilchuck High School are names of schools the millennial generation will never forget. Why? Not because of academic excellence, but because they were the sites of school shootings.

Connecticut State Trooper Patrick Dragon knows all too well the tragedy of school shootings. A Detective with the State Police Fire and Explosions Unit, State Trooper Dragon was among the first officers to enter Sandy Hook Elementary School immediately after the final shots were fired on the morning of 14 December 2012. He walked through the 27 bodies strewn across the elementary school. "It was pure adrenaline, a whole lot of fear, and a lot of disbelief as to what we were actually seeing," he said in an interview.

State Trooper Dragon's experience at Sandy Hook changed his views on gun control. Police officers take away a person's right to drive a car when they've abused the privilege, it should be the same with gun crimes said State Trooper Dragon. "There should be more backing through legislation, through the criminal justice system, enforcing penalties for the people who are committing these crimes," he said.

School shootings fueled calls for stricter gun control regulation in the US. Yet legislation continues to fail and the nation remains divided.

Historically in the US the youth (18- to 29-year olds) have been the demographic to push for change, but today this age group, known as the “millennial generation,” is outwardly apathetic when it comes to elections and this shows in their voting record. Is gun control failing because the millennial generation is not voting?

A Census Bureau report called youth voting rates “consistently low” citing the fact that youth typically only vote during Presidential elections.

According to a second Census Bureau report youth voting peaked at 51 percent in the 2008 Presidential election, and then dropped to 45 percent in the 2012 Presidential election.

In fact, youth voter turnout has steadily decreased since 1964. The first report also showed that in 1964 youth (then measured at ages 25 to 44) voted at a higher percentage than those aged 65 and above, today’s highest voting demographic.

Those youth were part of the generation who marched on Washington with Martin Luther King, these were the men sent to fight in Vietnam, the women who stood up against inequality in the work place. They voted to show their displeasure with the status quo and demand change.

In the most recent elections, the 2014 midterms, as the age of the demographic increased so too did support for the Republican Party. Where Democrats held an 11-point advantage among youth voters, Republicans enjoyed a 15-point advantage in

the 65-plus age bracket. However, only 13 percent of the millennial generation voted. Either way Republicans, typically staunch gun rights supporters, show up and outvote Democrats. A 2013 Pew study supported this theory when it found 25 percent of gun rights supporters donated to organizations supporting their opinions, versus only six percent of gun rights opponents.

In a study released one year after Sandy Hook, New York's Hamilton College found 85 percent of high school students support implementing stricter background checks for gun purchases. Background checks are a form of regulation often opposed by the gun-lobby-backed Republican Party, which believes they are an infringement upon personal rights.

In an interview Hamilton College economics professor Stephen Wu, lead researcher in the study, said while there was general support for the right to carry a gun, students strongly agreed "there should be stricter laws making sure guns don't get into the wrong hands."

US citizens enjoy free and democratic elections. If the millennial generation wants to see a change in US gun culture, a measure they already support, voting is the most powerful way to effect it.

The right wing, heavily Republican-backed National Rifle Association (NRA) is the body blocking stricter gun control. The NRA's executive director Wayne LaPierre

called for armed guards on campuses and blamed school shootings on the mentally ill whom he called “genuine monsters”.

“The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun,” he said during his speech to an NRA rally just one week after the Sandy Hook tragedy.

A 2013 Pew Research study concluded people in the US are buying guns because they are scared. The study found 37 percent of adults in the US reported having a gun in their household, 48 percent of whom said it was for protection while 32 percent said it was hunting purposes. In 1999, the same year as the shooting at Columbine High School, the statistics were the opposite: 49 percent of gun owners claimed their weapons were for hunting purposes and only 26 percent said they were for protection.

On 6 November 2014 pro-gun website BearingArms.com published the article “Where Guns Won and Lost in the 2014 Midterm Elections”. In it the author highlights specific politicians for their support of gun control legislation. Particular emphasis was placed on Connecticut, the home of Sandy Hook, when the author said: “Connecticut is a powder keg that could easily erupt into a civil war if [Governor] Malloy dares to attempt confiscation of hundreds of thousands of firearms and millions of standard capacity magazines that citizens refused to register.”

He goes on to say NRA-backed Republican candidates elected to the Senate will be acclimating to their new roles while, “Democrats who supported gun control will be pondering their retirement plans”.

John Rutledge retired in 1991 as the Chief of Police in Eugene, Oregon. After 29 years of service and an MSc in corrections (penal policy) he believes gun control starts with the person.

He argues schools must now bear the responsibility of fostering healthy self-images in youth. “If you can stop students from feeling isolated and angry maybe they’ll stop shooting each other,” he said in an interview.

A career police officer, Mr Rutledge strongly disagrees with the rampant US gun culture and lack of regulatory legislation. “What’s being practiced in Florida is almost the right to murder somebody you disagree with,” he said regarding the state’s ‘Stand Your Ground’ laws.

“What more would it take to get people out of their recliners and deal with it,” he added.

All eight-year-old Brooklyn Rosario wants is a safe place to hide inside her classroom during ‘Shelter in Place’ drills.

Caitlin Rosario, Brooklyn's mother, supports 'Shelter in Place' drills, but believes her daughter is too young to be learning about gun violence. Unfortunately, she and her husband were forced to address the issue after their daughter learned of the Sandy Hook shooting from classmates.

Twenty months ago Mrs Rosario received her license to carry a gun. Although she does not own a gun, and is not ready to keep one in her home, she feels the world is not a safe place anymore.

"We're in a different world than when I was younger," said Mrs Rosario.

Legislation legalizing marijuana and lifting the ban on gay marriage is being passed across the country. Gun control legislation is not keeping pace. The progressive liberal voice to fight for gun control has to come from the generation who practiced 'Shelter in Place' drills as their schools became battlegrounds.