

# Gun Laws Will Not Fix Problem of Culture and Spirit

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**By Star Parker**

RESTON, Va.—Once again the nation has witnessed a horrible, pointless act of violence, with innocent children the victims. And, once again, we hear from liberals that the answer is gun control.

If we look at what generally characterizes the mind-set of those—generally young men—who commit these acts, we see what generally characterizes the mind-set that has taken hold of our whole culture.

Victimhood, blame and denial of personal responsibility.

Can this be an accident?

## **Social and spiritual problem**

Kudos to *The Wall Street Journal* for having the courage to point to these incidents as signs of a “social and spiritual” problem in the country:

“The rise of family dysfunction and the decline of mediating institutions such as churches and social clubs have consequences.”

The signs of a society that is sick are all around us: the collapse of family, the collapse of interest in marriage and having children.

In 2021, 107,000 Americans died from drug overdoses, an all-time high and a 15 percent increase over the previous year.

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the suicide rate in the U.S. increased 35.2 percent from 1999 to 2018.

Suicide was the second leading cause of death among young people, ages 10-34, and the fourth leading cause of death among individuals ages 34-44.

## **Disproportionately men**

A characteristic common to suicides and mass killings is that the perpetrators are disproportionately men.

Men—generally young men—commit indiscriminate mass murder, and men take their own lives at a rate almost four times higher than women.

So men demonstrate in a most unpleasant way another truth that our liberal friends want to deny. Men are different from women—not just in physical makeup but also in spiritual, psychological makeup.

For whatever reason, our increasingly godless, materialistic, morally empty culture seems to take a particularly heavy toll on men.

### **Not in labor force**

American Enterprise Institute scholar Nick Eberstadt has looked into the recent phenomenon of prime-age men—ages 25-54—who have bailed out of the labor market. These are men who have stopped working and seeking work. The official label is NILF—not in the labor force.

According to Eberstadt, the total number of NILF men held steady in the 1940s and 1950s at around one million. Then in the late 1960s it exploded. There are now seven million prime-age men who have withdrawn from the workforce.

According to the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis, the labor-force participation rate of men—the percent of working age men in the workforce—was 86.2 percent in January 1950. In April 2022 it was 68 percent.

The labor-force participation rate for women has almost doubled over the same period—33.4 percent in January of 1950 to 56.7 percent in April 2022.

### **Centered on church or government?**

We've gone from a culture centered on church to a culture centered on government.

According to Gallup, in 1950 over 70 percent of Americans belonged to a church. In 2020 it was 47 percent. Among those born between 1981 and 1996 it's 36 percent.

Over the same period, the amount of all levels of government from our GDP went from 22.6 percent to 43.4 percent.

Sanctity of life was devalued with Roe v. Wade. Military conscription was abolished around the same time, erasing any personal responsibility, beyond paying taxes, that men have to serve.

### **Faith, tradition, personal responsibility**

In this vacuous culture of entitlement and meaninglessness, lost young men periodically make their presence known through violent expressions, sometimes directed at others, sometimes toward themselves.

I do not pretend that this is simple. I certainly agree that security measures should be taken, particularly in schools.

George Washington warned the nation in his farewell address that there is no freedom without faith, tradition and personal responsibility.

The same liberals that have helped wipe this out now want more government in the way of new gun laws to solve what is a cultural and spiritual crisis.