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Assault-weapon ban will be tough, but it's worth it to protect life

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NCR Today

Sick at heart, early Friday evening I went to the White House petition site, We the People. A news story had said there was a petition calling for gun control. There are several. The strongest call is, I think, "Today IS the day. Sponsor strict gun control laws." I was No. 5,468, and as of Wednesday afternoon, the petition has 35,541 signatures.

On that same petition site, there is also a petition calling for guns in every classroom to protect the children. When I first saw it, the signers numbered about 500, 10 percent of those on "Today IS the day." As of Wednesday, numbers in favor of arming teachers and principals are close to 9,000.

No surprise there. But I'm reminded of an essay, "An Arms Race We Can't Win," written by Andrew Jensen, a U.S. soldier home from Afghanistan. He describes what it is like to carry weapons and wear body armor, prepared every minute of every day to face an enemy. He's writing after the Aurora, Colo., theater shooting, and he presents a stark choice between being armed every minute of the day and banning assault weapons.

Gun control has been driven out of politics by National Rifle Association lobbyists. But the last time a state referendum was held, in Missouri in 1999, concealed carry lost, 51.7 percent to 48.3 percent. Four years later, the Missouri legislature passed concealed-carry laws. It will be a difficult political task to regain assault-weapon bans, limits on the size of ammunition clips and universal background checks. But that's the task in front of us, especially those of us committed to protecting life.

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