

The Press Dakotan

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OPINION

Fund Research On Gun Violence

One of the more frustrating features of the gun debate in America comes in regards to research into gun violence in the country. Given that 30,000 Americans — more than 80 every day — die annually through gun incidents ranging from high-profile mass shootings to far more common events such as suicides or accidental shootings, conducting research into the matter would seem smart and practical.

However, in terms of federal funding, that's not the case. Federally-funded research into gun violence and guns deaths, its causes and possible ways to reverse the trend has been nonexistent for nearly two decades thanks to a small rider bill that was slipped into spending package in 1996 by Rep. Jack Dickey, an Arkansas Republican. He placed the measure in the bill to halt any research by the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes Health that could possibly be used to "advocate or promote gun control."

Since then, more than a half-million people have died in this country from guns. The so-called Dickey amendment has become symbolic of America's unbending mentality on so many issues involving guns. While such research could possibly delve into developing better lock or storage systems or sharpen the parameters of mental illness and guns, we have instead officially ignored these matters. People keep dying, and we have no official interest into at least figuring out what to do to curb the fatalities. We are, in effect, satisfied with a morbid status quo.

But we can't be. It's time for Congress to lift the funding ban on research to gun violence. Such a move will reportedly be proposed by Democrats as part of the upcoming Omnibus spending bill. Republicans will likely reject it, especially with a presidential election year looming, but the effort must be made.

There are a lot of critics of the current ban — and one of them is Dickey himself, now an ex-lawmaker, who recently sent a letter to Congress requesting that the amendment be repealed. "Research could have been continued on gun violence without infringing on the rights of gun owners," he wrote to lawmakers. "Doing nothing is no longer an acceptable solution."

He added in an interview with The Trace news website: "I just regret it. I don't know if it was a change of heart, I just regret that we didn't maintain the commitment to funding science and research. In fact, I don't think I ever intended it to be a prohibition against spending money like that. It just shouldn't be spent for political purposes."

The number of deaths in this nation in which guns are involved speaks for itself. While mass shootings draw the screaming headlines, it is the smaller events — many of them not crimes, but simply accidents — that make up a large share of the statistics. Examining these causes offers at least a constructive approach to addressing the circumstances.

This measure needs to go.

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ONLINE OPINION

The results of the most recent Internet poll on the Press & Dakotan's Web site are as follows:

LATEST RESULTS:

Do you support Donald Trump's proposal to temporarily bar non-American Muslims from entering the United States?
Yes.....52%
No.....45%
Not sure.....3%
TOTAL VOTES CAST383

The Press & Dakotan Internet poll is not a scientific survey and reflects the opinions only of those who choose to participate. The results should not be construed as an accurate representation or scientific measurement of public opinion.

CURRENT QUESTION:

Should South Dakota pursue Medicaid expansion?

To cast your vote in the PRESS & DAKOTAN'S Internet poll, log on to our website at www.yankton.net.

IN HISTORY

By The Associated Press

Today is Tuesday, Dec. 15, the 349th day of 2015. There are 16 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History: On Dec. 15, 1965, two U.S. manned spacecraft, Gemini 6A and Gemini 7, maneuvered to within 10 feet of each other while in orbit.

On this date: In 1791, the Bill of Rights went into effect following ratification by Virginia.

In 1814, the "Hartford Convention" began as New England Federalists opposed to the War of 1812 secretly gathered in the Connecticut capital. (America's victory in the Battle of New Orleans and the war's end effectively discredited the Convention.)

In 1864, the two-day Battle of Nashville began during the Civil War as Union forces commanded by Maj. Gen. George H. Thomas attacked Confederate troops led by Gen. John Bell Hood; the result was a resounding Northern victory.

In 1890, Sioux Indian Chief Sitting Bull and 11 other tribe members were killed in Grand River, South Dakota, during a confrontation with Indian police.

In 1938, groundbreaking for the Jefferson Memorial took place in Washington, D.C., with President Franklin D. Roosevelt taking part in the ceremony.

In 1939, the Civil War motion picture epic "Gone with the Wind," starring Vivien Leigh and Clark Gable, had its world premiere in Atlanta.

In 1944, a single-engine plane carrying bandleader Glenn Miller, a major in the U.S. Army Air Forces, disappeared over the English Channel while en route to Paris.

In 1964, Canada's House of Commons approved dropping the country's "Red Ensign" flag in favor of a new design, the "Maple Leaf" flag.

In 1974, the horror spoof "Young Frankenstein," starring Gene Wilder and directed by Mel Brooks, was released by 20th Century Fox.

In 1989, a popular uprising began in Romania that resulted in the downfall of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.

In 1995, European Union leaders meeting in Madrid, Spain, chose "euro" as the name of the new single European currency.

In 2001, the Leaning Tower of Pisa, Italy, was reopened to the public after a \$27 million realignment that had dragged on for over a decade.

Ten years ago: Millions of Iraqis

turned out to choose a parliament in a mostly peaceful election. Former Sen. William Proxmire, the Wisconsin Democrat who'd fought government waste with his "Golden Fleece" awards, died in Sykesville, Maryland, at age 90.

Five years ago: The U.N. Security Council gave a unanimous vote of confidence to the government of Iraq by lifting 19-year-old sanctions on weapons and civilian nuclear power. *Time* magazine named Mark Zuckerberg, the 26-year-old co-founder and CEO of Facebook, its Person of the Year. Movie producer, director and writer Blake Edwards, 88, died in Santa Monica, California. Baseball Hall of Famer Bob Feller died in Cleveland at age 92. The New York Jets suspended assistant coach Sal Aloisi indefinitely after they discovered he'd ordered five inactive players to form a wall along the sideline for a punt return, during which he tripped Miami Dolphins player Nolan Carroll.

One year ago: A 16-hour hostage siege began in Sydney, Australia, as an Iranian-born, self-styled Muslim cleric took 17 hostages at a cafe; police ended up storming the cafe, resulting in the deaths of the gunman and two of his captives.

Today's Birthdays: Actor-comedian Tim Conway is 82. Singer Cindy Birdsong (The Supremes) is 76. Rock musician Dave Clark (The Dave Clark Five) is 73. Rock musician Carmine Appice (Vanilla Fudge) is 69. Actor Don Johnson is 66. Actress Melanie Chartoff is 65. Movie director Julie Taymor is 63. Movie director Alex Cox is 61. Actor Justin Ross is 61. Rock musician Paul Simonon (The Clash) is 60. Movie director John Lee Hancock is 59. DNC Vice Chairwoman Donna Brazile is 56. Country singer Doug Phelps (Brother Phelps; Kentucky Headhunters) is 55. Movie producer-director Reginald Hudlin is 54. Actress Helen Slater is 52. Actress Molly Price is 50. Actor Garrett Wang (wahng) is 47. Actor Michael Shanks is 45. Actor Stuart Townsend is 43. Figure skater Surya Bonaly is 42. "Crowd-hyper" Kito Trawick (Ghettown DJs) is 38. Actor Adam Brody is 36. Actress Michelle Dockery is 34. Actor George O. Gore II is 33. Actress Camilla Luddington is 32. Rock musician Alana Haim is 24. Actress Stefania Owen is 18.

Thought for Today: "The world is moving so fast these days that the one who says it can't be done is generally interrupted by someone doing it." — Harry Emerson Fosdick, American clergyman (1878-1969).

FROM THE BIBLE

Mat the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. 1 Thessalonians 3:12-13. Portals of Prayer, Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis.



The Rez Of The Story

Boarding Schools And The 'Indian Problem'

BY VINCE TWO EAGLES

Hau Mitakuepi (Greetings My Relatives). Here is part three of the boarding school experience, again, much of it taken from the film, "Our Spirits Don't Speak English" and my own personal experiences as a survivor.

According to historians, Manifest Destiny was a term coined by John O'Sullivan who was a newspaper man in the 1840s. It was the idea that God had given the United States a "manifest destiny" to create what was called a 'city upon the hill' to establish a perfect nation to be good and just and right. It would be used as justification for the western expansionist ideas of Euro-Americans and of course Indian people and Indian Nations were viewed as being in the way.

Gayle Ross wrote: "During the inevitable advance of what John O'Sullivan called 'the multiplying millions' across the continent, nearly 400 Treaties were negotiated with the Indians by the United States Government. In 120 of these treaties the government promised to furnish schools and teachers to educate Indian students in exchange for millions of acres of land. Many of those treaties designated smaller areas of land known as reservations.

"For 350 years after European contact Indians were forced off their lands, educated and converted to western ideology or killed" Dr. Daniel Wildcat stated: "There were ... three solutions proposed to solve the 'Indian Problem.' The first was geographical removal; move them out of the way, further west, west of the Mississippi and we'll establish their 'Indian Territories.'

"After the Civil War the federal policy moved from [geographical removal] to military subjugation; some in the military thought genocide was justifiable, 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian.'

"The third solution was education because after Custer's defeat at the Little Big Horn it was felt that military subjugation would not work either."

The United States arrived at a solution to the "Indian Problem."

"The leader of this education, pacification policy (as described in the film, 'Our Spirits Don't Speak English') was Civil War veteran, Captain Richard Henry Pratt. Pratt was commander of the 10th Calvary also known as the Buffalo Soldiers."

"With the idea that Indian people were to be assimilated in order to carry out the United State's policy, in 1879 the United States created Carlyle School in Carlyle, Pennsylvania. It was the first boarding school to be financially supported by the US Government and was to serve as a model for other schools which followed throughout the country. In-all, there were 25 such schools created to, as Pratt said, "kill the Indian and save the man."

Patty Joe King, M.A. (Cherokee): "Indian children sent to Carlyle were put through a process which stripped them of everything Native in a way that served to demoralize and dehumanize them. Their hair was cut, their clothes and anything else they brought with them were not just taken away but were put through a public spectacle — a public burning of these items.

"Their names were taken from them and they were given new names.

"At Carlyle Indian people were educated to the level of menial servitude."

Locally, many Indian people experienced the same kind of treatment reported at Carlyle while attending Marty Indian School. (For the record, Church Officials at St. Paul's Church

were contacted for their side of the story but elected to "remain silent at this time").

I am a third-generation survivor of the brutalization many of us suffered there. My grandfather, Fred Zephier Sr. was placed at Marty as was my mother, Margaret Zephier. My grandfather always spoke of how he was not allowed to speak Indian and how different ones told on those who spoke Indian. This set up long term hatred between certain families here on the reservation for generations, some still going on to this day.

My grandfather elected not to teach his children their Native language because those who spoke Indian were said to be "Big Indians". This meant that they were backwards, somehow dumb, ignorant and lazy people who shamed out the rest of the Indians who were trying to be "white" — "good Indians". What a burden of guilt and shame to lay on a people who would turn on one another like that.

My mother on the other hand, looked forward to being in school because her grandmother put her at Marty as a means to deal with the overwhelming poverty they faced at that time. My mother was one of the fortunate ones who was able to get along with just about anyone and if you know her is still that way today. She tells me that the one thing she is still deeply hurt by, though, is how they caused her to be afraid of elders. She remembers her grandmother calling her over to talk to her but my mom ignored her and was thus disconnected from her family in that way.

I was placed at Marty by my mother for the same reasons she was. My mother really felt that I would be better off. It may be true (I'm not sure) but my mother thinks that the boys were treated a lot more cruelly than the girls were. I witnessed many beatings and was beat on a daily basis myself because of my problem with wetting the bed. Sometimes the belt lines were just a way for the high school boys to have fun like pairing us off to fist fight for their amusement.

I saw runaways brought back and then shaved bald and whipped. I saw many students get their hands and knuckles hit with the sharp edge of a ruler for talking. But mostly like me we suffered in silence feeling like we were abandoned for no good reason. It's like we clung to each other emotionally because we had to. These systems were not designed to nurture children but to simply indoctrinate us with a so-called "civilized way of life" and of course Christianity.

There are many Indian people who because of the shameful nature of their experiences in boarding schools will not talk out in the open about it. After all these years because of what I experienced and witnessed (a witness to violence is a victim of violence it is said) I am still haunted by those terrible memories. Every time I see those I went to school with there it triggers those memories all over again, especially those I saw getting hit or beaten.

I don't blame those who are there at the church now because they weren't around when this happened but I do hold the church itself accountable for the way they treated us Native people especially in the name of God and Christianity.

There is an epilogue to all of this because believe it or not some people were able to turn the experiences into positives in their lives.

In next week's Rez, I will finish up this "Boarding School Experience" with that in mind.

Doksha ...

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