



# ***Heeding God's Call***

## ***to End Gun Violence***

### **HGC Board Member Harvey Freedenberg Reviews:**

***The Violence Inside Us: A Brief History of an Ongoing American Tragedy*** by US Senator Chris Murphy (Random House, \$28 hardcover, \$14 Kindle version - [Amazon link](#))

Chris Murphy is able to identify precisely the date his life changed forever. It was December 14, 2012, the day 20 six- and seven-year-old children and six adults were slaughtered by gunfire at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., a town in the congressional district he served, and was soon to represent as Connecticut's junior senator.

*The Violence Inside Us: A Brief History of an Ongoing American Tragedy* is the passionate and often deeply moving story of Murphy's personal transformation. It is a well-informed, thoughtful exploration of the causes and potential solutions for the United States' epidemic of gun violence--one that claims around 90 lives every day--even as it addresses that vexing problem in a broader context.

Buttressed by material from the sources cataloged in his book's 30 pages of notes, Murphy engages in a wide-ranging survey of the roots of American violence. Yet there is no single explanation for the impulse to reach for all too readily available handguns to resolve conflict or put an end to personal suffering through suicide. Murphy thus recognizes the imperative to address multiple complex problems like poverty, racism, the decline of what he calls the "blue collar aristocracy," and even the penchant for relying on "brute force and the proliferation of dangerous weapons to advance our national security goals" in any proposed remedies.

And while *The Violence Inside Us* is not exclusively, or even primarily, about the current debate over gun control legislation in the "most homicidal country in the high-income world," Murphy devotes ample attention to the political battles that have consumed him since 2012. In a confession that may surprise some, he concedes that the Supreme Court's 2008 decision in *District of Columbia v. Heller*--recognizing an individual right to possess firearms under the Second Amendment--is "basically correct." But he is quick to point out that even the majority in that case acknowledged that the right is not unlimited. Murphy has become a tireless advocate for the two principal measures--universal background checks and a ban on assault weapons--he believes will have a positive effect in curbing the traffic in illegal firearms and at least limiting the ability of killers like the one at Sandy Hook to summon massive lethal power in seconds.

Even as the political clout of the National Rifle Association appears to be waning, and an overwhelming consensus builds for gun control measures like the ones Murphy promotes, he is without illusions about the effort that will be required to enact even these modest reforms. Whether one is already engaged in that fight or seeking information and inspiration to do so, *The Violence Inside Us* is essential reading.

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*Heeding God's Call to End Gun Violence (Heeding)* is a faith-based and grassroots organization devoted solely to saving lives from the uniquely American scourge of gun violence. *Heeding* is headquartered in Philadelphia, with volunteer chapters in the Mid-Atlantic. *Heeding's* activities include using faithful public pressure to persuade gun retailers to eschew sales to those who would resell guns on the street, public interfaith Murder Site Witnesses in effected neighborhoods, installations of Memorials to the Lost™, portable tee-shirt memorials honoring local victims of gun violence and more.

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