



Gun Violence and Homelessness - The Lost Connection

By Emerson Johnston

This past Sunday, the American people were shown yet another reason why we should give up the fight against gun violence. This past attack is the 6th event to be named the deadliest mass shooting in Modern American history in the last decade. The events of the Las Vegas shooting are no doubt going to change the debate surrounding this issue because unlike last time, our current president isn't showing any signs of helping.

Many people are unaware of the link between gun violence and homeless. It's one of those things that many overlook due to the lack media attention it's given. According to the NHCHC, in the city of Philadelphia, 1 out of every 20 high school students or approximately 8% of all children have experienced homelessness or has been kicked out or run away. What's important to note here is that Philadelphia experiences the highest rates of community violence in the nation compounding their experience of trauma. Not only does this violence affect these children but it affects the cities as well. In the last year, we have spent over 100 Billion on gun violence, whether it be to support of efforts to stop it or to pay for the damage they've caused. This not only harms communities but it harms the people within them because people are spending their resources on something that should've been fixed years ago.

According to Erica Goode of the New York Times, "Gun violence is tightly concentrated in the poorest urban neighborhoods, its victims mostly minorities, who receive little attention from politicians and the news media." The connection between the homeless communities and gun violence is seen here; it's due mainly to the vulnerabilities experienced by those living on the streets. This vulnerability is luckily being addressed by a pilot program through King County called Rapid Rehousing for Families. The \$3.1 million effort is encouraging on many levels. Their goal is to move hundreds of homeless families quickly off the streets, out of shelters and back into permanent housing as briskly as possible.

Gun Violence is an important issue and we all must do something to stop it, however, we cannot neglect to address the effects it has on the communities we ignore every day. We must join together if we ever hope to stop this nationwide massacre.