

Submitter: James Farmer
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB1503

<https://jpfo.org/alerts2014/alert20140324.htm>

March 24, 2014

Guns as a Health Issue
Washington Post Promotes Same Old Propaganda
By Nicki Kenyon

The Washington Post's editorial board is once again flogging its well-worn, neurotic, hysterical fixation with gun control by disingenuously conflating health care and guns. And they're using this old, odious tactic to push the nomination of Barack Obama's selection for the next Surgeon General. And oh GOODNESS, do they lay it on thick! For decades, doctors and other public health experts have argued that preventing

gun deaths, particularly from accidents and suicides, should be a priority -- like curtailing car fatalities or tobacco use. For their sense, the National Rifle Association (NRA) and others on the pro-gun side have pilloried them, ruining careers and stopping needed research with the help of a cowed Congress. Their latest victim is Vivek Hallegere Murthy, President Obama's pick to be surgeon general, whose nomination is languishing in the Senate after the NRA and various conservative commentators attacked him. The NRA is wrong, and senators who know better should find some backbone.

Awww. Poor Dr. Murthy! His nomination has been held up by the evil NRA and its lapdogs in the Senate, who have the temerity to demand that the chief physician of the nation be free of partisan politics and stay out of contentious political debates, while focusing on actual, you know, HEALTH issues!

Because, guess what!

Accidents and suicides by gun are no more a health issues than they are by any other implement!

And waiting periods and licensing will no more reduce suicides than outlawing laxatives will reduce bulimia.

It's a worn-out strawman, but the Post just keeps beating it.

In 2010, according to the Centers for Disease Control, 38,364 people committed suicide. This is a staggering and sad statistic that thousands and thousands of people in this nation are desperate and down enough to end their lives. Of those 38,364 people, 19,392 people used firearms to take their own lives, 5,298 took pills, 9,493 suffocated themselves, and the rest took their lives in other ways. Are the rest of these deaths any less tragic than the deaths by firearm? Are they any less sad? Any less staggering?

And more importantly, is there any evidence that had guns not been available to them, these people would reconsider?

There isn't.

As a matter of fact, according to the World Health Organization, despite the availability of guns, the United States ranks 33rd in the world in suicide rates, behind such gun control utopias as China, Japan, Ukraine, Russia and Greenland, as well as Finland, Belgium, France and Austria. All these countries have much tighter gun control and much higher suicide rates than the United States.

So even though, the majority of those tragic souls who end their lives in the United States do so with firearms, suicide rates are actually much higher in countries that

ban guns.

So what is the real health issue on which Dr. Murthy should be focusing? Is it guns, or is it the actual root causes of such desperate depression, that the only solution seems to be to end the suffering?

Looking at accidental deaths, we see that out of the nearly 121,000 fatalities that occurred in 2010, the largest number, nearly 34,000, occurred in motor vehicle accidents, followed closely by unintentional poisonings. Are these tragic ac