



FROM THE DESK OF
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CHAIRMAN & CEO

Like all of you, I am struggling to find words for this past weekend in the United States.

To go to bed Saturday night praying for the victims of El Paso — only to wake up Sunday morning learning we now needed to mourn the victims of Dayton — was a new and devastating kind of anguish.

These past several years, we've all prayed and mourned for so many families in so many places – Las Vegas, Orlando, San Bernardino, Pittsburgh, many more – and for our own dear neighbors in Parkland.

Although the phrase “thoughts and prayers” has been worn thin, I believe that thoughts and prayers always have value. They have value when they lead to comfort and understanding. And they have value when they lead to action.

In the middle of the 20th Century, a theologian named Reinhold Niebuhr wrote what has come to be called “The Serenity Prayer”:

*God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And wisdom to know the difference*

There are those who, tragedy after tragedy, have wanted us to focus on the first line of that prayer. But I came to work this morning thinking about the second line.

We've learned, to our horror, that these murderers have acted in the name of white supremacy, religious bigotry, homophobia, and racism. We've talked before about how we must condemn all such bigotry; we also need to condemn the poisonous atmosphere that permeates our public discourse and makes it all too easy for some to jump from verbal attacks to physical. If I disagree with you, it is OK to view me as mistaken; you may even consider me misguided. But it has become all too common that people with a different perspective are labeled as evil or accused of acting from insidious motives. That poisonous speech is also a driver of our ills.

There are so many challenges we must face. But the one horrible thread that ties all these awful incidents together is overly easy access to guns. Not access to guns; overly easy access to guns.

I am a gun owner myself, and a responsible one. So I don't instinctively lean towards drastic measures. But when I lived in England, the permitting, testing and registration process to own a firearm was significant — and well-considered. It was inconvenient, but I can tell you from experience that sensible restrictions can be quite tolerable.

What isn't tolerable is that it was perfectly legal for the Dayton gunman to obtain 100-round drum cartridges like this one:



And to see our leaders react, again and again, with only thoughts and prayers is also not tolerable.

So I ask:

Is gun violence something we must accept because it cannot be changed? Or is it time to demand our leaders demonstrate the courage to change the things we can?

I will not for a second pretend that the answers to defusing this crisis are easy. Nor are the arguments one-sided. But failing to take serious, bipartisan measures to address this issue will only get more people killed. We can't let the perfect be the enemy of the good.

So, I am placing calls to both of Florida's United States Senators today. I will thank them for their thoughts and prayers. And then I will ask them to convert those thoughts and prayers into action, working with others who seek to bring about sensible change to gun laws. For our part, we are contributing \$250,000 to March For Our Lives, the organization founded by the Parkland community, and we will match any RCL employee donations made to the March.

It is time to change the things we can.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be "Ron DeSantis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.