



## Letter to the Editor

January 11, 2013

### Will tragedy bring about federal action?

The swift response of Regional School unit 21 Superintendent Andrew Dolloff along with administrators and teachers following the rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Newtown, Conn., speaks well of our public school system's values and leadership.

However, stronger action may be required to bring about federal legislation that bans all military assault weapons in our country.

Action by the school children themselves may be the most forceful avenue to accomplish this in light of fierce opposition to any change on regulation of firearms. Would administrators and parents see the merits for every school child to write a letter to local, state and federal elected officials to act now?

Once before in our history, school children of America brought about federal action. At the beginning of the last century, the USS Constitution, Old Ironsides, had deteriorated in Boston harbor and was in dire need for repair and replacement of most of her wooden hull.

Although Congress had passed a bill to refurbish the historic vessel, it provided no funds to do so. In 1925, it was the public school children across the country that came to the ship's rescue. Millions of children saved their pennies and donated \$148,000 to save the historic ship.

The U.S. Congress, shamed by the actions of the school children, finally voted to provide additional funds to complete the restoration of Old Ironsides.

"No room was as silent as the children's music room at Auschwitz where hung small violins on the walls," writes poet Philip Larkin. The holocaust at Sandy Hook Elementary school in Newtown cries out for a reply to the sounds of silence of the twenty 6- and 7-year olds and their six teachers.

Out of their silenced mouths, reverberates but one question for every member of Congress, governor and state legislature: If you do not act to ban these instruments of our slaughter now, when will you do so? Is there reason to hope for music once again in the children's room at Sandy Hook, while our hearts are like a cup that somebody had drunk dry?

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