

# Time Bomb

Tick.

I was 14 years old when I arranged the March for Our Lives walk out at my middle school. When I woke up that morning I wore my nicest skirt and my mom even let me put on mascara. For the first time in my life I was doing something that mattered, something that was going to bring change. However, I'm from a small conservative town in Michigan where dreamers like myself are encouraged to never break the status quo. They proved that to me when I walked out and my front lawn was covered in toilet paper. In every tree, on every branch, everywhere my eyes looked was nothing but a stream of white. There were signs spewed with hateful words and belittling quotes that made me feel like nothing. By 8:05 that morning, the mascara was cried off leaving nothing but smudges of black.

Tick.

I was 15 years old when I was silent. I no longer spoke loudly in class, debating every opinion I disagreed with; clashing down the opposition with words used as weapons. I turned to writing instead of speaking, clutching the ballpoint pen in my hand as I wrote paragraphs of ink smudged together in a mess of anger. I was angry. Because for a girl born with a voice being silenced was torture. I practiced passionate debates alone in my room, hoping for the day that I could finally speak again in class and not worry about my home being defaced or my friends exhiling me from my lunch table.

Tick.

I am now 16 years old and I am tired of being silent. I am tired of waiting for an opportunity for my voice to mean something. Because along with enforcing my silence my protest made one thing clear: nothing changed. Our first amendment right to assemble is sacred, and for years protests have been essential to our nation. But with every day that passes the words 'mass shooting' become a part of our vocabulary. Instead of horror I respond with, "how many people this time?" There shouldn't have been a first and there definitely shouldn't have been a 2,426th since Sandy Hook. The mix of prayers and protests are clearly not working as more of my peers die with every day that passes.

Tick.

We need legislative change. Your generations had the Vietnam War and 9/11. Mine has mass shootings. Everyday I battle to rebuild my confidence and it feels entirely useless. I don't have the luxury of time to wait until midterms in 2022. How many more parents will lose their children before we can vote? How many people have to die before we can change this? How many kids will it take to right this wrong? Legislation is what this situation needs, prayers are not working anymore. My opinion was the same two years ago and it will remain the same for the next two years. I refuse to watch innocent people die when there are simple fixes. By lowering the age of voting you let kids like me finally have the satisfaction of change, something I've been longing for since I was in the 4th grade when Sandy Hook took place.

Tick.

Over the years I've gotten good at numbing myself to the pain of these situations. I've adapted to learn how to make escape routes for every classroom.

Tick.

I hope to make it to 18, when I can walk into a voting booth and wear my sticker with pride.

Tick.

Until then, hopefully I make it out of here alive.