WASHINGTON (NNPA) – In the late 1960s, Black revolutionary H. Rap Brown, now known as Jamil Abdullah al-Amin, was often quoted as saying violence is “as American as cherry pie.” More than 40 years after the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) firebrand made that pronouncement, the numbers supports his assertion.

According to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, nearly 100,000 people in the U.S. are shot each year in murders, assaults, suicides, accidents or by law enforcement officials. Of the 31,593 who died in 2008 from gun violence, 2,179 were murdered; 18,223 killed themselves; 592 were killed accidently; 326 were killed during police intervention and 273 died, but the intent was unknown.

The report shows that 66,769 survived gun injuries, including 44,466 who were injured in a gun attack; 3,013 were injured during a suicide attempt; 18,610 were shot accidently and 679 were shot during police intervention.

On average, according to the Brady Campaign:

• Every day, 270 people in America, 47 of them children and teens, are shot in murders, assaults, suicides, accidents and police intervention;
• Every day, 87 people die from gun violence, 33 of them murdered;
• Every day, eight children and teens die from gun violence;
• Every day, 183 people are shot, but survive their gun injuries and
• Every day, 38 children and teens are shot, but survive their gun injuries.
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Every time there is mass murder, there are flashbacks to earlier killings: The University of Texas tower sniper in 1966, the 1986 post office shootings in Edmond, Oklahoma that inspired the term “going postal,” the Columbine High massacre in 1999, the deadly shooting spree at Virginia Tech in 2007, the Fort Hood Texas mass murder in 2009, the weird-look on the face of Jared Loughner after he fatally shot six people and injured 12 others last year, including Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, in Tucson.

This year has seen an unusual number of high-profile shootings. In April, three Black people were killed and two more injured in Tulsa as part of a hate crime. In July, 12 people were killed and 58 were injured in Aurora, Colorado at the midnight premier of the Batman movie, “The Dark Knight Rises.” And in August, seven people were killed at three injured at a Sikh temple in a Milwaukee suburb.

Other terrorizing acts also come to mind, including Timothy McVeigh’s 1995 bombing of the federal building in Oklahoma City and Ted Kaczynski, the Harvard-educated “Unabomber,” who was sentenced to eight consecutive life sentences in 1998 for killing three people and injuring 23 others over a 20-year period.

And, now a mass slaughter at an elementary school.

At a prayer vigil Sunday night in Newtown, Conn. for the 20 children, most of them 6- or 7-years-old, and six adults, President Obama said it is time to explore what can be done to curb

gun violence.

He said, “Can we honestly say that we’re doing enough to keep our children – all of them – safe from harm? Can we claim, as a nation, that we’re all together there, letting them know that they are loved, and teaching them to love in return? Can we say that we’re truly doing enough to give all the children of this country the chance they deserve to live out their lives in happiness and with purpose? I’ve been reflecting on this the last few days, and if we’re honest with ourselves, the answer is no. We’re not doing enough. And we will have to change.”

In the wake of the latest shooting spree, even some longtime National Rifle Association supporters are saying we need more stringent gun laws.

Senator Sen. Joe Manchin (D-West Va.) – who has an “A” rating from the NRA – said: “I just came with my family from deer hunting,” Manchin said on MSNBC’s “Morning Joe.” “I’ve never had more than three shells in a clip. Sometimes you don’t get more than one shot anyway at a deer. It’s common sense. It’s time to move beyond rhetoric. We need to sit down and have a common-sense discussion and move in a reasonable way.”

Even Rupert Murdock, CEO of News Corp., asked rhetorically on his Twitter account, “When will politicians find courage to ban automatic weapons?” Murdock’s media empire includes Fox News, which strongly advocates pro-gun positions.

Although it may not seem like it, America is less violent than it was two decades ago, according the FBI crime statistics. The homicide rate, which peaked at 10 per 100,000 in the early 1990s, is now about half that rate. However, the same can’t be said of mass murders, defined as involving the deaths of at least four people.

James Alan Fox, professor of criminology, law and public policy at Northeastern University in Boston, said there is no pattern with mass murders. He said there were 645 mass-murder events between 1976 and 2010.

Even at its greatly reduced level, the U.S. is far more violent than other high-income countries. Data from the World Health Organization for 2003 from 23 heavily populated high-income countries showed that the U.S had far higher rates of firearm deaths than the other 22 countries studied.

In fact, of the 23 countries examined, 80 percent of all firearm deaths occurred in the U.S., 86 percent of all women killed by firearms were females living in the United States and of all children 14 and under killed by firearms, 87 percent of them were in the U.S.

Speaking in Connecticut, Obama said, “Since I’ve been president, this is the fourth time we have come together to comfort a grieving community torn apart by a mass shooting. The fourth time we’ve hugged survivors. The fourth time we’ve consoled the families of victims. And in between, there have been an endless series of deadly shootings across the country, almost daily reports of victims, many of them children, in small towns and big cities all across America – victims whose – much of the time, their only fault was being in the wrong place at the wrong

time.”