



December 17, 2012

DATE

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It's All About Public Safety

by Joyce E. Dudley, District Attorney

It's all about public safety.

As members of society, whenever tragedies strike we are always reminded first about what is most important to us: the safety and security of those we hold close and those in our greater community. Whether we are fighting fires, seeking answers to a public health crisis, or confronting random acts of despicable violence, it all comes down to public safety and what we can learn to better protect ourselves and others. This is especially true when it comes to our most vulnerable victims—those who cannot protect themselves.

From my perspective, the only unacceptable response is apathy; that is, for us to quietly go on because we have become a society of "the learned helpless."

I call upon myself and each of you to do something to positively affect our public's safety. For some it will mean volunteering at a local school, for others at a non-profit organization, and for others it will mean fighting for funds for mental health research/treatment, and for some creating new laws that can truly make a difference. Many of you may decide you can best serve public safety in a very public way, while others will seek to help one person who could severely affect our public's health and safety.

Whatever you think you can do, now is the time to do it. Let the unimaginable pain and anguish of those affected by the Sandy Hook tragedy inspire, empower, and motivate you to do what you only once thought about doing but soon got distracted by your own feelings of frustration, inadequacy and helplessness. Don't let the fact that you can't solve the problem delay you from making a difference for even one potential victim.

Our overall goal is to increase public safety. Your action does define who you are and who we are as residents of Santa Barbara County and The United States of America.

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