

Intro Music: [00:00](#)

JP: [00:09](#) Hey everybody. This is the legal disclaimer where we tell you the views, thoughts, and opinions shared on this podcast belong solely to us that people talking and not necessarily Brady or Brady's affiliates. Please know that this podcast does contain discussions of violence that some people may find disturbing and it's okay. We find it pretty disturbing too.

Intro Music: [00:09](#)

JP: [00:46](#) Thank you for joining us for our first ever full length podcast. We are so glad that you're here with us, but honestly we are so sad too that you have to be here. Ideally one day we will never have to have this podcast because this epidemic of gun violence, it will be over and we'll be out of a job. So while that day hasn't come yet, we have some great people working to make it a reality. Brady in particular, note the whole red, blue and Brady part of the name is one of the oldest and boldest gun violence prevention organizations in the movement

JP: [01:23](#) And because of that long history that we're about to dive into, because both Jim and Sarah accomplished so much in their lifetimes and Brady continues to keep up the fight that they started to help us get an inside look into who the Bradys were and what their work continues to live on to be. We're starting off the full length episodes with a friend who knew both the Brady's well.

JP: [01:47](#) This person also had a front row seat to the world in which they lived and acted because they were there together. He and the Bradys were there as as political figures, as activists and as thought leaders. As such, we are so pleased to have the opportunity to interview a man who wears all of these hats and I'm super excited to learn more about his work in disability rights and how that intersects with the gun violence prevention movement

JP: [02:15](#) And because we are a bipartisan organization as our podcast name, red, blue and Brady. More than hints at also be honoring that bi-partisan legacy that he has. The first gas for a full life podcast, we'll be Congressman Tony Coelho, who is the majority whip of the house of representatives when the Brady bill was first introduced and he was a dear friend of both Jim and Sarah Brady. He has an incredible life of service and humor and one that is as remarkable and as poignant as Jim and Sarah's.

JP:	02:51	And this conversation of course, could not be the same without our fearless leader, Kris Brown.
JP:	02:56	Hi everyone.
JP:	02:57	Kris is the president of Brady.
JP:	03:00	And as you may recognize from the different voices coming out, I'm JP.
JP:	03:05	and I'm J J.
JP:	03:07	And we are your hosts for it.
JJ:	03:09	So we actually will probably just jump right into it by asking you to introduce yourself to our audience.
Tony Coelho:	03:16	My name is Tony Coelho. I was in the Congress and I was the author of the ADA while I was there. So happy to be with all of you today.
JJ:	03:24	Oh well thank you. And for our younger or nonpolitical viewers, viewers, listeners at home, what is ADA?
Tony Coelho:	03:34	Americans with disabilities act. It is the civil rights who all, for those of us in the disability community, meaning that we can't be discriminated against in regards to jobs and access to the internet or access to sidewalks or anything like that. But it's the major legislation that gives us our civil rights.
JJ:	03:54	And one of the reasons why we really, really wanted you here today besides the fact that you're this phenomenal Brady ally with us long history with us, is that you've also had this incredibly long and storied role and us politics. You went from representing California as 96 districts for 11 years to chairing the D triple C to serving as the house majority whip to, you know, being a part of the Hispanic caucus. And so we were just wondering what does that journey like and do you have something that you identify as sort of the proudest moment of your years in public service or
Tony Coelho:	04:33	it was a, it was a wild journey, a wonderful journey. I got started because I had been rejected from the priesthood because it was determined that I had epilepsy and Canon law in the Catholic church at that time. I said that 1964 said that if you have epilepsy, you're possessed by the devil. You can't be a priest. So I was rejected and I felt good about it. And then I knew what my

problem was because I'd been having seizures for several years. But then, uh, uh, when I tried to get a job, I had got some offers as a, I'm a student body president. I was staying senior in my university, but as I did, I would check the box at set up sheet and I never even got, uh, an interview. As a result, I realized then that, uh, it was my epilepsy that was causing trouble. I had been rejected by my church show. I thought that my church had turned against me and that God had turned against me. My family rejected my epilepsy because as devout Catholics, they believed that I was possessed and that it had a negative impact on the whole family. So I felt that my family had turned against me. And so I started drinking heavily and, and I was suicidal. And, uh, one day when I was about to do the dirty deed of a voice came over me and there was a Merry round at the bottom of the Hill and Griffith park in California where I was, and boys said, you're gonna be just like those little kids getting in off and on the Merry go round. You're never going to let anybody stop you from doing what you want to do. And I've never really gotten drunk since then. 've not been depressed. Uh, I then got a, an opportunity to live with Bob hope and his family for a year. He pushed me hard to do believe that Ben in a church was a ministry, but that there's lots of ministries and all different types of OCS occupations, a sports entertainment, so like himself or whatever. But he said, you know where you belong as you belong in politics. And I'd never thought of that. And so I wrote a letter to my Congressman when I got the job. I've always thanked Mr. Hope was since then. And so I got the job and I worked for my congressman who I didn't know by the way for 13 plus years. And when he retired I took his spot and that gave me the opportunity then to author the American with disabilities act. So it was a interesting journey. I was a staffer of 14 years and a member for a little over 10 years and I was able to do lots of different things if campaign chair for the house Democrats for six years. I set up the operation they currently used now and then was majority of our fourth ranking position in the house and on the democratic side. And it was exciting, just really exciting. But the most important thing I did in my life was to author the American disabilities act. It is the law of the land in regards to those of us with disabilities, but it's now also the wild land in 52 different countries. A version of it, not exactly what we have in the States, but a version of it. So it's had an impact worldwide. And, and it's, um, I have a lot of appreciation for what a lot of people have gone to make the ADA happen. But it's my proudest moment.

JJ:

[08:09](#)

It's, that's a ugh, I don't know what to say. That's a phenomenal life story. A snippet that you gave us. I know that was one of the questions that I really wanted to ask you as, as a Catholic, I

wanted to ask you, how do you go from, since I'm Catholic, how do you go from priesthood to politics? It seemed like an interesting transition for me and I think you gave us the reason for that.

Tony Coelho:

[08:31](#)

Well, I think one of the things I should say that I was, and I'm still am a devout Catholic, the, when I became whip, I had an opportunity to take a foreign trip and take delegation with me, approved by the state department, and I got to go to three countries. I could pick two and the state department would pick one. So as someone who was Portuguese American, uh, first Portuguese American elected to the Congress, I decided of course I wanted to go to Portugal because we'd be a state visit and speak to the parliament there and so forth. And state department one me to go to Morocco and visited with the King because the Moroccans and the Portuguese were working on some situations in the middle East and they wanted me to help out. So I agreed to that. And then I got to pick the third country and I chose, of course the Vatican with the request that I get a meeting with a poet. And so my delegation and I met there with the Pope being walked in the door at the Vatican to our room and, and we all stood up and he sat down, we sat down and now is my opportunity to go to the podium and say something. Cause I have a, I'm a strong believer that whenever you have the podium or whatever, you have the attention of, everybody doesn't have to be an actual podium, but whenever you have the podium that you should say what you believe. So I read a very boring speech that was preapproved by the state department and the Vatican. When I got through with it, I said, your holiness, I cannot live with myself if I didn't say something personal that was minions around the room or going, dah, dah, dah, dah, dah. My delegation is looking crazy. And my wife, I didn't tell her either. I didn't tell anyone. And so I said, as a young man, I decided I wanted to become a Catholic priest. I was denied entry because I have epilepsy and Canada lost, wished in 400 Ady said that if you have epilepsy or possessed by the devil, you can't be a creature. I think that's very un-Christian of our church and I wish you'd look into it. And I sat down, he then gave his very boring preapproved speech, didn't add anything. We then took hundreds of pictures. We couldn't use our own cameras. They had photographers there and they charges \$5 a photo and of course all was got lots of photos and it was, and it was great. We, when we got through, we, my wife and I, and I escorted him to the door. He held her hand as we got to the door. When we got to the door, he turned around in blessed her. He turned to me, did not bless me and said, young man, I heard your comments and walked away. Now as a Catholic, I thought I was going straight to hell because that's a

problem. But, uh, no, but that's the way it was. I was the not unhappy that I did what I did. I knew that what I wanted to do and I felt strongly about it. That's why I decided I wanted to go to the Vatican. Well, the good news is that two years later, Canon law was changed to permit people with epilepsy or men with epilepsy to become priests. Now I'm very careful. I don't take credit for it because nobody has notified me to this day that it was my conversation with the Pope that did it. It just happened. I know what I did. I'm very proud of the fact that I confronted the Pope on it and I know the results and that to me is what's most important. And which Pope was it that you have that you spoke to? St John Paul.

JJ: [12:15](#)

Oh, and you're so lucky that a Swiss guard didn't swoop in at any moment there too.

Tony Coelho: [12:22](#)

He was very good on disabilities by the way. So um, uh, it just a wonderful human being. I just am happy that I got to meet him and so happy that he made the change.

Kris Brown: [12:35](#)

Tony, it's Kris. From your story, it really is amazing to think about your personal journey and the impact that you had on this nation as the author of the ADA. I suppose some people looking at it would say in a sense that it's predestination that you were really chosen for this role. If you look back on it and think that you had your heart set on one thing and because of epilepsy went in a different direction. How do you think about that when you think about the impact you've made and the role that you've played on the national stage?

Tony Coelho: [13:14](#)

Well as a good Catholic, I believe there is a destiny and that you don't necessarily control it, participate in it, and I'm just grateful for all that I've been able to do. I, it's not necessarily because of me, it's because of opportunities that came my way at certain points in my life and I've been able to do a lot and I've enjoyed it. I mean, after I left the Congress, I went to wall street and was there for seven years, did well financially, but I continued my involvement on disability issues under president Clinton. I became chair of the president's committee to hire people with disabilities and became the cochair of the task force presidential task force on adults with disabilities. There were seven cabinet officers and myself on that task force and the president's committee. When Clinton left, I had an agreement with him that if I had made that it was an old agency, small agency. I was, I did it pro bono, but I said that if I could make it into something that he had to put us at the big boys table. In other words that I had had to become an assistant secretaries position instead of something that got the scraps off the table. And he agreed. So

at the end of his term went to them and I said, here's what we've done. I'm now collecting on our agreement that it become, uh, an assistant check Jerry's spot at the labor department. He agreed with some opposition from his staff, but he agreed and he issued an executive order creating the assistant secretary spot. And now it is there and it's been functioning and it does a great job. So I just, you know, I honestly, I've been so lucky. I've been fortunate to be able to participate in so many things in my devotion to, uh, disabilities continues. I'm on the epilepsy foundation board for all these years, but I've also started now be Quello center on disability of rights and innovation at my Alma mater. And while I at Los Angeles, Loyola Marymount university, and we started in November of last year. Uh, it's going great. I'm very excited about it. I want that to be my legacy in effect. But it's, you know, all these opportunities come my way and I've been able to take advantage of them. I'm blessed. I really, I dunno what else to say.

Kris Brown:

[16:06](#)

That's really amazing. And I think it reminds me if I may, a lot of Jim Brady and Sarah Brady and the journey that they took because ultimately Jim had intended to serve and a capacity as press secretary to president Ronald Reagan and ended up getting shot. And his life took a very, very different direction. But despite that and his injuries, he devoted together with Sarah the rest of his life to the enactment of the Brady law. And you know, it's nothing that every anyone would ever wish on someone else, but it's those same kinds of characteristics that you clearly had that, that I think Jim had as well. And I knew, I know you knew him and Sarah personally, and I wonder if you can comment on that and the kind of character they had and the role that they played in getting the Brady law enacted.

Tony Coelho:

[17:03](#)

Well, Jim not only was smart and capable and so forth, but he had a great sense of humor and was loved by the Reagans and, but the, in a whole cabinet and, and it had nothing to do with party. Obviously. Jim was a Republican and I'm a Democrat, but we got along great. And the one, my favorite story about Jim and Sarah is that we had a gala, uh, rehab hospital. Um, I was on the board and, and we gave the, I forget what its proper name was, but the spirit human spirit award to Jim. And when we got there that night to BA and so forth, and I was talking to he and Sarah, I had heard that at home, he was walking, but that in public, he always use the wheelchair. So I said to Sarah, I said, Sarah, what do you think if I asked Jim to walk out on stage with me, I'll hold him and so forth.

Tony Coelho:

[18:05](#)

But if he'd walk out on stage, do you think he'd agree? She said, well, if you ask him, he might said, I'll support you, but why don't you ask them? So I bent down and, and I was nervous and I said, Jim, this crowd would go bananas if you walked out on stage. And he started shaking and I said, wait a minute, I said, I will be with you. I'll walk with you, I'll hold you and we'll walk across the stage and people will go bananas and when we get to the podium, we'll have your chair there so you don't have to stand the whole time, but I just really would like you to do it and I think you'd love it. And the crowd would love it. He said, okay, they announce it, the him is the award and he gets up and I'm holding him. He was a big guy and we started out from backstage on in front of the curtain and the crowd went bananas. I'm in, people were yelling and clapping and so forth and he, I started tearing up and so did he. And we got to the podium and he waved and so forth and then sat down. But that was a very special moment that told me something about Sarah and had told me something about Jim. And his determination and so forth of what a wonderful human being instead of feeling sorry for himself as a result of the tragedy, he turned that into an opportunity to make a difference and help others and that's what's great about Jim and people like him is that instead of internalizing it and being negative, turn it into making a difference in people's lives and so forth. He did it big time and we're still benefiting from Jim and Sarah's work and I for 1:00 AM totally supportive of the group is doing. It's something that we need and something that people should show courage and do what's right. I come from a a hunting area in central California. I've owned guns have hunted, but if you need a war gun to hunt, you shouldn't be a Hunter. It's, it's ludicrous that we protect all guns no matter what. Just because of the second amendment. The second amendment doesn't say all guns should be illegal. And so it's sad that we still have not been able to cross this bridge and it doesn't look like we're going to be able to at this point with the, with the president, however, can't give up. You've got to keep fighting. You got to keep trying and hopefully we can get there.

JP:

[21:03](#)

And you also, as well as being friends with the Bradys saw their determination from the legislative standpoint as well.

Tony Coelho:

[21:12](#)

Absolutely.

JP:

[21:13](#)

Went on February 4th, 1987 the Brady act, which was introduced in U S Congress for the first time. At that particular time you wear the house whip. How and when from your experience did Congress react to the bill and were you kind of

surprised by the way that the issue of gun violence was taken up by Congress at the time?

Tony Coelho: [21:37](#)

Well, we had a situation then as you know, where things were fairly bi-partisan as you know, and, and this was a very legitimate issue. And with Jim and Sarah being the advocates, I don't think people really appreciate just how popular Jim and Sarah were. His sense of humor all the way through. It made him into uh, a bigger, bigger, uh, individual and, and share his devotion to Jim and to the cause made them a very, very powerful couple. And it was hard for the Congress to turn them down. It would not pass today probably, but it did then and thank God it did then. And it's a vehicle to help us do things that need to be done. Like right now, there are people who want to say that, uh, if you have mental illness, you should be institutionalized or you should have some of your rights taken away because you're a dangerous to society just because of your mental illness that you could cause a tremendous amount of gun violence that is so unfair to people with mental disabilities. And it's unfair to the whole disability community because in my view, if you go against one of us in the community, you go against all of us in the community. The stigma based on that stigmatizes all of us. And so I have been fighting hard in regards to keeping that part of the mental disability out of all this gun legislation that people talk about. Some people like to blame it all on mental illness when we all know what the problem is. It's not mental illness.

JJ: [23:28](#)

Well and when, when people go on our website@bradyunited.org slash podcast or they look us up on social media at Brady buzz, one of the things that we'll be linking to actually is the article that you did, the op-ed that was published in the Hill after the date and El Paso shootings that was called are killing us, not mental illness. Which by the way is a great title like it. It definitely tells you what the opinion of the op ed is and I just wondered based on that, why you think after in particular these mass shootings, why recently this administration or or the media likes to claim that it's mental illness that causes the shootings?

Tony Coelho: [24:06](#)

Well, we're doing a lot of work. I'm very involved with several organizations now that are trying to educate people, particularly in the Senate and the house, but particularly in the Senate to try to make sure that something isn't adopted that includes mental illness. We're making great progress. I would say I think we've pretty much got the Democrats understanding that this is not correct, that it's a stigma that is not only wrong for mental disabilities, but it's wrong for the whole disability

community and so we've made great progress. We're actually making some progress with some of the Republicans as well, but where we intend as a disability community, not just the mental illness but the disability community as a whole. We intend to fight this aggressively because it's wrong, wrong in every sense of the word

JP:

[25:05](#)

And a big part of the lobbying around that mental illness and that conversation has been from the gun lobby looking to take away the blame from some of the laws that we currently have in place at the federal and state level. In thinking back to when the Brady act was brought up in 1987, what have you seen be the big changes at the NRA in terms of messaging, in terms of leadership, and not only at the NRA, but from the gun lobby in general? Have you seen any big changes in, in terms of mission and leadership?

Tony Coelho:

[25:42](#)

Well, there are two things that have happened. One is that the, with the election of president Trump that the NRA was heavily involved in, they seem to have a tremendous amount of political sway, uh, over him. Uh, his instincts, uh, are fairly good at times, but then the NRA gets to him and he backs off. That's all fairly documented. It's not me just saying it. And, and so what you're seeing is they have basically against anything that goes against any gun legislation because it started like, uh, the nose under the tent. Uh, why don't you start and blah, blah, blah. I remember when I was in Congress, there was an amendment to require the registration of machine guns and the same arguments were used then against that, that they use today. And I, uh, from my district in California, which was a major flyway duck hunters and so forth. I took the position of supporting that amendment and the NRA came after me aggressively billboards and radio spots and so forth. But I, I took it as a, as a challenge and I really went out and educated my district as to what was going on here. And I basically took the position, if you need a machine gun to hunt, you shouldn't be hunting. And, and I basically won easily that timeout, uh, even though they were aggressively after me, I just think that a lot of politicians, uh, are afraid to educate their constituents. And if they did, the public generally would understand this. And, and as we've seen in the polls, they support a lot of the things that are being suggested from our point of view, responsible of gun control. And, but it takes some leadership on the part of the elected officials to educate their constituency. I take the view that you get elected as a consultant to your constituents for two or six years and that you should do what's in the best, their best interests for that period of time and then go back and report. I don't think that this issue gets enough play in regards to a lot of

these districts because I think people generally are responsible on this issue, but we need more courage and leadership from elected officials.

Kris Brown: [28:13](#)

I think that's a really good point, Tony, and it's certainly one that we as an organization focused a lot on in the last federal election cycle. I think that's how we ended up getting a gun violence prevention majority elected in the house of representatives for the first time in a generation and the key element there are leaders who can speak with authority around this issue and who aren't afraid to embrace all of the solutions they believe are necessary from a policy standpoint to address the epidemic of gun violence. How, how do you feel as someone who was in that Congress for a long time, someone who has been schooled and the changing nature of Congress over the last 20 years about where we might land in 2020? This is quite an election with right now impeachment looming. How do you think the electorate will react?

Tony Coelho: [29:12](#)

Well, I am, I'm a partisan Democrat, right? I do believe in bipartisanship and that's how the ADA got adopted and so forth. So, but I am a partisan Democrat. I think that if we could win the white house and if we could take back the Senate, we would be able to do pass responsible gun legislation. I really believe that the leadership is there to do it in the house. And I think that if we could get the majority in the Senate, we could do it there as well. I think that there is a majority that would support responsible gun legislation, but people need to understand that in order to do that, you got to register and you got to vote. And it's critical important. Uh, what happens in the courts now are in a situation that, uh, we need to, to be able to make some appointments to the Supreme court, to federal courts all across the country. That is a critical issue in order to do the things that we think are responsible.

JP: [30:15](#)

Do you think that gone are the days of us coming together for our grand bipartisan deal on an issue like gun violence and gun violence prevention?

Tony Coelho: [30:24](#)

Well, I'm a big believer in the pendulum. The pendulum goes the left to the right back and forth, back input and I think that it's gone to the right right now accidental way of course. And happens like with Watergate, it moved from the right to the left rather dramatically. And, but our government is a stable government and it will move back to a situation where bipartisanship does prevail. We just got to believe that I really strongly believe it and we got to believe it. But that means we've got to get out and work to make that happen.

Kris Brown:	31:03	Yup. Yup. Which is in the end what Jim and Sarah Brady did. I mean,
Tony Coelho:	31:08	Right. They didn't give up. They fought,
JP:	31:11	They, they fought. It took six years and seven votes as you know. And then ultimately it passed the Senate by unanimous consent. And I think, you know, to me that gives me hope about possibility in our future. It's not something that can't be replicated again.
Tony Coelho:	31:30	That's right. That's right.
JJ:	31:31	But before I know that you have to run, we are so lucky to get you just for a half hour, but we had one final question for you, which is we always try to end these on a little bit of a, of an uplifting note or a call to action. And so what do you wish that voters, particularly young voters, people who it's going to be their first voting cycle, or just the American public in general, what do you wish that they knew about the gun violence prevention movement or about Jim and Sarah Brady? What do you wish that they knew to be a truly informed person on the pendulum?
Tony Coelho:	32:03	I think what they need to know is that none of us are again, are in favor of eliminating all gun. There are legitimate uses for guns, but there's no use for war weapons. We're individuals to own and there should be responsible gun legislation, responsible ownership, and if you take appall even of gun owners, they happen to agree with them and it's just that the leadership in the Congress needs to be able to be willing to fight the NRA and put them in their place. That going to happen this year. In my view, I wish it, I thought we had shot and maybe we still might, but we need to insist that our readers understand what is going on in this country and I am thrilled with the activity of our young people there. They're making a difference. Our young people are speaking up aggressively and that ultimately is what's going to get us there. And I don't want to see another mass shooting, but with our young people willing to fight, we're going to get there. I'm very optimistic about that. We're going to get there
Kris Brown:	33:15	on that note.!
JP:	33:16	Yeah. Thank you so much, Tony. Tony, thank you so much for your time and sharing your incredible journey and public service.

Tony Coelho:	33:25	Thank you very much. I enjoyed our discussion
Music:	33:25	
JJ:	33:32	So for our camp, believe it today, although I think we really did end that on a really positive note. So this is good because this is going to be another, I can't believe it that we picked to be funny, but it's probably just going to be sad. Uh, which I'm learning. I'm learning is sort of like a Brady motto of we took joy and humor in this. We found the humor in the situation, but it's not something that maybe like in the elevator would make good conversation. Right? And so this is from that a number of images have begun circulating from hobby lobby. And in fact, some of these images are quite old. One of the articles that we're gonna link to is all the way back from 2017 which in internet years is eons. But these are images from hobby lobby, which is selling very overt NRA and gun merchandise, many of which advocate shooting people directly and they're being sold as a decorative item. We've put up on app Brady buzz on the Instagram, a number of images. But the one that really struck me, I actually, this is, I took a screenshot of this today from their website and for the low low price of eight 89 you can purchase a God's guns and guts made America free. Let's keep it that way. Sign that you can hang at, they say hanging in a man cave, which is also a term I hate, but hate hanging in a man cave garage or office to show your love of America.
Kris Brown:	34:57	Nice. Yeah. And so this popped up in a number of outlets. I know Brady has actually tweeted about it now saying that individuals should let hobby lobby know that this is gross. But I just sort of wondered about JP. Would you hang this in your man cave? Do you have a man cave? J.
JP:	35:13	Please. Man. Cave inherently makes it sound like all men are just like these cave men walking around, which I guess maybe more correct than I. Like for me it implies, it's like when you see the man cave, she shed thing. It implies that like men and women can't have similar interests that can be like in the same house together.
JJ:	35:32	They have to live seperatly.
JP:	35:33	Yeah. Completely separate. Yeah.
JP:	35:38	I can't tell if cause it says God guns and guts here. I can't tell if the guts is from the guns or [inaudible] as in like you have guts.

JJ: [35:45](#) Yeah. They're not using the oxford comma, which was really lazy of them to do

JP: [35:50](#) Like eat shoots and leaves!

JJ: [35:51](#) Exactly the same kind of thing. It's the let's eat grandma, right. One to have, right? Yeah. Where you put the comma matters folks.

Kris Brown: [35:59](#) Um, yeah. I think from a, just a pure marketing perspective, put everything else aside. The message is rather lacking and makes one wonder what it is that the point might be. I can't, I can't see anyone I know putting a God guns and guts made America free sign in their house or even an a man cave.

JJ: [36:20](#) Yeah. I mean I like God and I like guts.

JP: [36:23](#) Yeah. I like the TV show guts. Yeah.

JJ: [36:26](#) Oh, to summer Sanders. I like responsible gun ownership, but I don't know if again that that's a sign and some of the other ones were actually a little bit more overt. For example, there's one that says, and this house we don't call nine one one and underneath of it are two pistols and our locked.

JP: [36:46](#) Nice.

JJ: [36:47](#) Yeah, and so, and then there's this number, a number of ones actually the call, you know like yay and RA, et cetera there. And so some detractors who actually enjoy shopping at hobby lobby because hobby lobby allies itself as a Christian organization, a Christian business, which is why I picked the God Gunson guts sign saying to quote by selling NRA and gun merchandise in your store, you are perpetrating both. One the fallacy that Christian support gun ownership and violence and two that making money is more important than taking a stand. Neither of these values I want to teach my children and that's directly from a blog we're going to link here that came out from these initial reportings of all of these signs in hobby lobby. And I will say that they also do have a number of gun merchandise. For example, there is a lamp that's just a gun with a lampshade on top

Kris Brown: [37:41](#) that I, it would be really interesting to know how much inventory is still sitting in their stores versus how much that sold. But I think the folks that are pushing back against this are raising really valid and important points. I mean, in the end, as someone who spent a lot of time during the course of my

childhood and being raised in the Catholic faith, for example, one of the tenants really is to help out your neighbor and to be there for other people and to ensure that we protect one another. These kinds of signs seem to go completely against that notion. And so I, to me, it smacks of moving away entirely from anything that most Christians I know would, would want to put in their home.

JP:

[38:28](#)

And Chris, one question that I think we've talked about a couple of times on the podcast is what are ways that regular people can try to create change? Not only from most of the time we're talking about the policy or big picture policies, how you can advocate on different issues in your Capitol. But this kind of speaks to how we can engage also with businesses, with culture and try to create change at the local level, particularly within capitalism as well.

Kris Brown:

[38:58](#)

Well, we've seen so much of that happening, right? The engagement with corporate America where just a few weeks ago, I think we had an announcement with by 145 different corporations saying, Congress must act, Congress must do something more. Walmart's changing its practices, Kroger changing its practices, and that didn't happen overnight. That happened with engagement by consumers, engagement by concerned Americans, this kind of engagement, which really makes a difference and I think it's beyond just corporate America. The other piece of that is what's very important to us at Brady is giving people agency in their own lives to be able to talk about the issue of guns in a way that takes away all of this notion that it's a taboo topic, right? And being able to talk about guns with people who may have guns in their home and make sure that if you're sending your kids for a play date and another the person's house, that you have the agency to be able to ask how those guns are stored. And I think this kind of marketing takes, it makes it harder for people to engage in those conversations. And that makes me really, really sad because we lose eight kids a day to family fire in this country. And that's mainly if not exclusively in homes with guns. So we need to have these conversations and really change the social norm around the issue of gun ownership where it's not a problem to own a gun. There's a rich heritage in this country of owning guns. But let's talk about safe storage and make sure that all of our families and our communities are safe.

JP:

[40:40](#)

Yeah. And what have you, so if you were talking to a advocate, a student, what would you ask them to do in order to address someone like hobby lobby right now?

Kris Brown: [40:52](#) I would ask them to organize other friends and community members to find out where the local hobby lobby is. One of the first things to do is try and engage the local store owners. You are potentially consumers there. They pay attention to that. Also, if you have a little bit of time, figure out the hobby lobby corporate interests, figure out their corporate office and maybe give them a call and ask them to change out their stock and inventory and to remove this because it's offensive. All of the things that you've noted, most of these places have a number to call and that can be really important. Maybe you even have the number that you can get.

JP: [41:34](#) We have, we have the number here. It's (855) 329-7060 and if you're like me and you've already forgotten it, we will have this posted in the episode description and on our website and on social media, it's, it's there. So if you would like to call the hobby lobby corporate office, just remember we're always polite, we're always respectful, you know, don't call them and yell. It's not somebody working on their phone line that made this end decision, but just state, you know that your opinion very clear is that they may have a sign that's God, guns and guts made America free and let's keep it that way. And your responses, you know, guns are not making America free. Let's fix it.

Kris: [42:16](#) Exactly what you said JJ. But ultimately I'd love to hear back that after the red blue and Brady podcast, there were enough calls that hobby lobby changed its practices and we know just from recent history that we can make a difference here.

JP: [42:30](#) So let's go do it. Yeah, and if, if they changed their policy in sight, people from the red blue and Brady podcast for doing it, we'll we'll do something. We'll do a big up, we'll do some sort of celebration for that. Some or just like the Catholic church and the Pope and they don't say anything. Yeah, we'll take it. We'll take some depth, some appropriate decorative wall art will be on the way. Let's replace it with Brady wall art or just gun violence prevention. Nice hanging signs. Hopefully made an America cause I didn't look into where these signs were made. Perhaps with a purple hue. Exactly. Some kind. Lovely. Yes.

JP: [43:07](#) So this can be a hard and depressing space to work. And we've talked about that because we talk about the worst moments in people's lives again and again. I mean, sometimes we get to talk about great things that happen like today, but you know, a lot of times it's a little bit of a hard slog, but it is really nice. And what gives us hope is that once a week we get to talk about these gun violence prevention heroes. These are the people,

organizations or what have you, that are doing amazing work in this space.

- JP: [43:37](#) And you may realize that sometimes, even though we call it DVP hero, it becomes a group of people heroes. Because oftentimes in this work, we need to do it together in order for us to really have a big impact because they were the group of incredible survivors, a fantastic coalition that have been working in this movement for a long time. All in their own ways came together in Washington D C today. We're honoring them for that action following the end gun violence rally outside the Capitol. Two dozen victims of violence, including the suburban Chicago mother who lost two kids to shootings, survivors of the Parkland and Las Vegas massacres. Folks from Kentucky plus several house Democrats including representative Robin Kelly from Chicago, representative John Lewis from Atlanta, and we fan grilled over them and we of course fangled over them. So did Christian. What we found, we found person gendered over them, although they couldn't get to match, they were able to talk to his legal counsel, which obviously is a person who may not be quite the ear of the Senator himself, but someone who does lead a lot of the work day to day.
- JJ: [44:54](#) And it's his legal counsel too. It's not like it was, it's Tiffany G his head legal counsel as opposed to, you know, it's not his Phish counsel. It's not the person who takes care of the topiaries. This is, this is someone important for him.
- JP: [45:04](#) It's focusing on gun violence. So we were incredibly inspired by their voices. By the way that they spoke to the Republican leadership and they had a message. Survivor Allieah Eastman said, it's time for you to tell your boss to do something since it's all in your hands. And we want to keep echoing that as gun violence prevention legislation sits on the desk of the president but also of the Senate and we want to see action happen and we want these lives to be saved because survivors will continually have to do this work unless we really are able to find some solutions to help decrease the gun violence in our country. So we are so thankful and appreciative for all those survivors who do this activism work day in and day out. Particularly those who joined us in D C a couple weeks ago,
- JJ: [46:02](#) including some activists that showed up, had to be here, drove for hours to be here, and then hopped on a train to go to another rally, which is the level of commitment is astounding and the amount of energy it takes to do this work. I was exhausted. I couldn't do anything for like a good 24 hours after.

And I did a fraction of what I mean. Hell, you did a ton more than I did. I dunno how you're still standing and not.

JP: [46:27](#) It was, it was a long day and I was able to go to sleep in my own bed while a lot of these activists weren't so,

JJ: [46:34](#) but if you have someone that we need to know about an organization that's knocking it out of the park, someone who's doing great work in their neighborhood, they don't have to be Brady affiliated. We want to see people in this movement and this movement is bigger than just Brady. So let us know by going to [Brady united.org/podcast](https://bradyunited.org/podcast) or by contacting us on social media at Brady buzz. Let us know what they're doing, what you're doing. We want to hear about your work. And if you send it in, you have a very solid chance of winning the GVP hero.

Kris Brown: [47:07](#) Thanks for listening. As always, Brady's lifesaving work and Congress, the courts and communities across the country is made possible. Thanks to you. For more information on Brady or how to get involved in the fight against gun violence. Please like and subscribe to the podcast. New full length episodes. Drop every Monday weekly. Wrap-ups drop on Fridays. Minisodes come whenever we can fit them in. You can always get in touch with us@bradyunited.org or on social at Brady buzz. Be safe and remember, take action, not sides.

Speaker 1: [48:03](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 7: [48:04](#) [inaudible].