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## Lafayette activist

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You can't imagine the pain unless you've been in this seat."

Nor could Sposato have imagined the effect of his testimony. The media bombarded him. "I learned how Congress is controlled by the NRA, and the means to beat that is through the media. I relentlessly went after the politicians."

Sposato did the national talk show circuit. He spoke at a press conference with Clinton in the Rose Garden. He hammered politicians every chance he could, and his efforts paid off.

Feinstein's assault weapons ban - part of the 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act - passed narrowly in the Senate. With Sposato standing behind him at the White House ceremony, Clinton signed the bill, which he dedicated to Jody and two others.

"You opened your remarks at the White House by saying that though you were honored to be there, you would rather not have been called to speak under such circumstances. I honor you now for a different reason - your incredible courage. This country cannot thank you enough for the contribution you have made," Clinton wrote in a letter to Sposato.

### The activism continues

The ban expired in 2004, but Sposato's intensity has not. "I'm

still angry. My wife took five in the back. Weapons of war are available in the U.S. and to buy these things doesn't require a background check. It's a failure of government. They're supposed to protect us and they aren't doing it. It's pathetic."

It's not as if Sposato, a lifelong Republican and gun owner, is anti-gun. "I have no interest in getting rid of the Second Amendment. You want to own a rifle, own it. You want a gun for self-defense, ask the police how to use it." But he insists that assault weapons have got to go.

Remarried and now with three daughters, Sposato, president of a high-tech consulting firm, said he has faith in the students who are disrupting the establishment after the Parkland, Florida high school shootings, driven by their own anger and the absurdity of seeing their friends getting killed. "They can move CEOs with their vast buying power. And they can make changes in this election. Make guns a pivotal issue, demand universal background checks and an assault weapons ban. Do not stop until you get what you want." He recently delivered the same message to students at Acalanes High School.

The public appears to be listening. American voters support stricter gun laws 66 - 31 percent, the highest level of support ever

measured by the independent Quinnipiac University National Poll, taken after the Parkland shootings. Support for universal background checks was itself almost universal, at 97 - 2 percent.

### The lingering effects

With every Virginia Tech, every Columbine, every Sandy Hook, every Parkland, the images return. "Absolutely, the wounds reopen," O'Roke said. "I feel fearful, I withdraw and I have problems with short-term memory." Now an activist living in Oklahoma City, O'Roke said she experienced years of guilt over Jody's death, feeling that no deposition would have been necessary had she been able to convince her boss to settle Jody's EDS employment claim. "If we had, she would have been alive," O'Roke said. Sposato heard about O'Roke's tortured feelings through a CNN producer he knew. "Steve called me and said that I was only doing my job, and that I had nothing to do with Jody's death. The one responsible was Ferri," said O'Roke, who has never met Sposato. "It was a gesture I will never forget."

Sposato agreed that the surreal images remain forever. "I had to tell a 10-month-old that mommy was dead. I'd like to say I've gotten over this, but you never get over it."

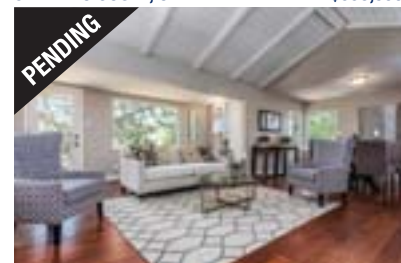



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