

Teacher Requirement: Firearm Trained

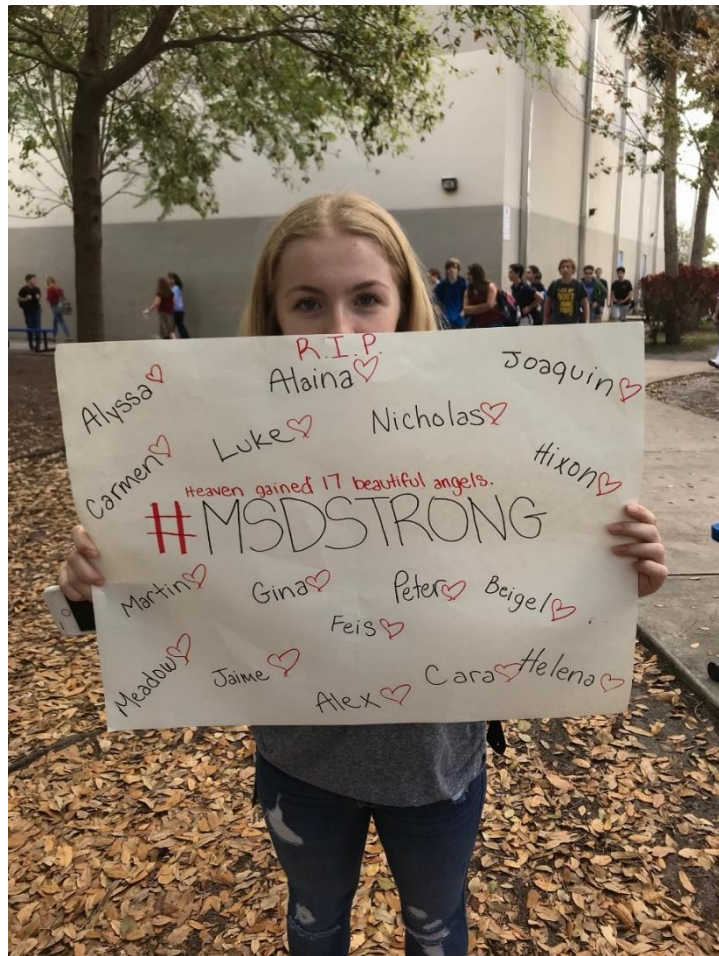
Trump's plan to "harden schools" from shooters

The February 14th shooting that killed 17 students and teachers in Parkland Florida galvanized students at Marjory Douglas high school and around the county to protest against gun violence. The hashtag #NeverAgain started to spread on Twitter "for and by the survivors" of the tragedy. With almost 200,00 followers, the students at the high school involved continue to spread their message and end school shootings. Although this tragedy helped encourage people to rise up against the use of guns, this is not the first shooting to occur in the United States just this year (2018), it is actually the tenth.

Adding firearms in schools will not protect students or stop incoming shooters. Many teachers and aspiring teachers agree that this will just add to their worries and endanger the children around them. "Bringing more guns into our schools does nothing to protect our students and educators from gun violence" Lily Eskelsen Garcia president of the National Education Association (NEA) which represents 3 million educators in American public schools and college campuses said.

Public access to guns started in 1791 with the Second Amendment that allowed United State citizens to have "the right to bear arms." At the time the government relied on an ordinary civilian with their own weapons who received part-time military training to act as a militia. Over 200 years later, this continues

to be implemented despite societal changes. Trump shows his support for the Second Amendment with his involvement with the National Rifle Association (NRA) and their support. He described the Second Amendment to be "a bedrock natural right of the individual to defend self, family, and property." Trump along with his two sons are members of the NRA and his sons "live" the Second Amendment. "They hunt target shoot, shoot competitively and carry firearms for personal protection," He said. Despite multiple deaths from school shootings he continues to



support the Second Amendment. After the Parkland shooting, his solution caused a national response with the suggestion of giving teachers firearms.



On February 22, 2018, the Associated Press released a statement by Trump. “We have to harden our schools, not soften them up,” Trump said. He explained his solution by giving “highly adapted people guns” in schools specifically teachers. He doesn’t want to make guns illegal but make a school safer by providing weapons for teachers. “A gun free zone to a

killer or somebody who wants to be a killer is like going in for the ice cream. That means nobody has a gun except them,” he continued. “These people are cowards. They are not going to walk in the school if 20% of the teachers have guns.” This policy is dependent that shooters don’t want to go to a school when some teachers have firearms but for the many people, a teacher’s job is to make sure their students have the support they need to not pick up the gun in the first place. “Our students need more books, art and musical programs, nurses and school counselors,” Garcia says. How can additional guns stop them from being fired?

Maxeene Lodlow, a senior music education major at the College of New Jersey, in Ewing, NJ is passionate about teaching middle school students. “I don’t think they (shooters) will care if teachers have a gun” Lodlow said. When people decide to go use a gun at a school they hit a low where “there’s no stopping yourself.” This comments on the shooter’s mental state. Lodlow has wanted to be a music teacher since 4th grade. “I had band and chorus classes. I fell in love with it since I was good at it.” When she decided to be a teacher, school shootings were happening in this country but the president didn’t suggest to give teachers firearms. She feels a teacher’s job is to “inspire students, to inspire them with creativity or inspire them to believe in themselves,” she said. “We are supposed to save students but we shouldn’t have to protect them in that sense. In a way that’s endangering ourselves as well.” Yet, this doesn’t change her opinion about being a teacher since firing the gun isn’t a requirement.

Fotini Rossi, a special education teacher of 15 years in Ridgefield, NJ. “A teacher fulfills their job by caring for the children, ensuring they are safe at home and at school, as well as teaching them and helping them succeed. I believe a teacher’s job is to teach children to be better individuals as well as teach them important skills. I do not believe a teacher’s job is to protect students from flying bullets by firing a gun myself.”

Neither believed their job as a teacher was to use a gun. In fact, Rossi said she would quit if that was a requirement while Lodlow said she would probably still want to be a teacher. Even so, she said this after she decided training is required but not firing the gun. The addition of guns in a school would create hesitancy within the teachers. “I don’t think anyone should feel unsafe,” says Rossi. “I think this would make a school a scarier place in many cases. Many students would not be comfortable with having guns around them.” An experienced teacher, the president of the NEA, and an aspiring teacher have a similar opinion that guns would not help but cause even more tension and tragedies.

The first shooting this year occurred on January 20th in Winston Salem, North Carolina that resulted in the death of Najee Ali Baker who was shot to death on the campus of Wake Forest University. There were 4 school shootings in January this year alone. With these two shooting 18 students in total have been killed, but these are only 2 out of 17 that happened between January and March 24th. Shootings have occurred in Maryland twice, California, Alabama twice, Mississippi twice, Michigan, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, Nashville, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Kentucky, Texas, and North Carolina. 15 different places. 17 shootings. About 26 lives taken. In 3 months. People have grown more desperate with each gun fired begging the president to change gun laws.

Still, school shootings continue to rise and there are few answers on how to best protect students, teachers, and administrators. While Trump said guns should be handed to “qualified” educators Lodlow and Rossi, have their own alternate ideas on how to best protect the students. Both suggested having a police officer patrol the school in case something occurs. “Police officers should be around schools, beepers at every entrance, depending on the school,” Lodlow said. Rossi believes there should be some kind of an individual in the school who is trained to use a gun. “There should be a trained individual like a police officer, or a retired police officer who can patrol the school and at least be present to protect if something did occur.”

Additional suggestions have been proposed to protect students from shooters in different newspapers, magazines, and professionals. Ron Avi Astor, a writer for Cable News Network (CNN) wrote an article titled, “7 ways to help prevent school shootings” which gives alternate options. He talks about paying more attention to people who say that want to harm another and have open

discussions about mental health. Along with saying expulsion should be the beginning, not the end. “What happens to students after they are expelled for bringing weapons to schools or



threatening to harm others? Do we take this potentially dangerous person and offer them support or monitoring in society – and withhold their education” Astor wrote. No teacher simply suggests illegalizing guns but focus on the students they care for and how to help them from the start. Although this topic has been controversial throughout the year’s recent events have encouraged many to speak.

With the rise of student’s voices and teachers pleads to stop gun violence them becoming a norm in a classroom is uncertain but it remains a possibility we should be aware of before another bullet gets fired.