



June 24, 2019

**FOAC Position Paper: SB 621 PN 1009 - Providing Schools with Options Pertaining to School Safety and Security**

Dear House of Representatives Member:

*Support the  
2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment*

*'Discere  
et  
Illuminaire'*

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I am reaching out to you in regard to [SB 621 PN 1009](#), which amends Act 44 of 2018 and provides for, as you know, specific criteria for armed security personnel in Pennsylvania schools. Our position on this legislation is that we wholeheartedly support it and we ask that you support it with your vote should this legislation come to the floor.

This past Friday, a gun-control organization sent a communication to the legislature that was, in our opinion, nothing more than agenda driven misinformation piece that continues myopic viewpoints that resulted in the failed concept of gun free zones being pushed on schools.

***Please consider the following facts:***

- **The rate of shootings and people killed by them has increased significantly since 2000.** The yearly average number of people who died between 2001 and 2008 versus 2009 and 2018 has doubled (regardless of whether one excludes gang fights and suicides).
- **HOWEVER, this increase has occurred ENTIRELY AMONG SCHOOLS THAT DON'T LET TEACHERS CARRY GUNS.** Outside of suicides or gang violence in the wee hours of the morning, there has yet to be a single case of someone being wounded or killed from a shooting when armed teachers are around.
- **There haven't been any serious accidents.** No student has ever gotten hold of his or her teacher's gun. And the one accidental firearms discharge by a teacher occurred outside of school hours. The teacher had only very minor injuries.

**So, IF the misguided rhetoric** of 'keeping guns out of schools' were true then the facts above would not be possible and would even show violent events tilt towards the schools where armed security and school staff existed, yet the opposite is true. We understand and recognize that the concept of providing for armed security at schools, and even in some states the ability for teachers to carry concealed weapons in order to protect America's students, always engenders plenty of passionate arguments from both sides. Unfortunately, during the debate on these issues all too often the facts are overridden by unfounded fear mongering and hysteria or mislaid or purposely set aside all the while losing opportunities to enact and put into place truly effective measures.

Well we accept the fact that this is a sensitive subject, to say the least, yet it's one we must tackle head on if we are to have 'any' hope to transform the landscape of protecting our children in schools. That involves looking at the hard facts of the problem we're trying to fix.

Given the choice of committing a heinous crime on defenseless victims or armed individuals not willing to become victims, which do you think criminals would choose? Let's look at the facts!

60% of convicted felons admitted they avoided committing crimes when they knew their potential victim was armed. 40% of convicted felons admitted they avoided committing crimes when they thought the victim *might* be armed. So, criminals are not only undeterred by gun-free zones, they actively seek them out and knowingly capitalize on them to ensure their attack goes unchallenged.

**Consider this:** When James Holmes planned out his attack on movie goers attending the midnight showing of *The Dark Knight Returns*, he visited neighboring theaters, took photographs of the layout, bought his ticket nearly two weeks in advance and out of the seven theaters within a 20 minute drive of his apartment, **he chose the only theater posting signs banning concealed guns, which was the furthest away.**

It's no mystery where [mass shootings](#) in America take place or why criminals choose to carry out their evil deeds in them, schools are much different than any other venue in this discussion.

As an example, in 2015, Wisconsin Governor Scott Walker signed into law a bill allowing off-duty and retired law enforcement officers to carry in schools.

**Prof. Eric Dietz, Ph.D.**, former director of Homeland Security for the state of Indiana and a 22-year Army veteran, now a professor at Purdue University, [researched mass shootings](#) from the 1950s on. He discovered that only two of them occurred where guns are legal to be carried. Think about that: every mass shooting in the United States since the 1950's except two have occurred in gun-free zones.

So, what can be done?

Here are some more facts to consider:

- **Currently**, 20 states allow, in addition to credentialed school security, teachers and other school staff members to carry guns under a variety of rules on school property, so we don't need to guess about how safe these schools are. Some states have had these rules for decades.
- Not a single person has been injured or killed by a teacher's gun. **But even more amazing, not a single person has been shot during any time near school hours.**
- Allowing school employees and/or officers to carry guns also makes the job of the police much safer. Concealed carry means that killers won't know who is armed. Even if they take an officer by surprise, they must worry that they are revealing their position to someone else who can stop them.
- The Crime Prevention Research Center has just released [a report](#) looking at school shootings of all types in the United States from 2000 through 2018.
- The study found that during these 18 years Utah, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and parts of Oregon allowed **all** permitted teachers and staff to carry guns without any additional training requirements. Other states leave it to the discretion of the local superintendent or school board.
- Roughly 5 percent of Utah teachers carry permitted concealed handguns at schools across the entire state, according to Clark Aposhian, the senior member of Utah's Concealed Firearm Review Board.
- **Support staff** – including janitors, librarians, secretaries and lunch staff – carry firearms at a higher estimated rate of between 10 and 12 percent.
- Carrying a gun in a school is no different than being armed in a grocery store, movie theater, or restaurant.

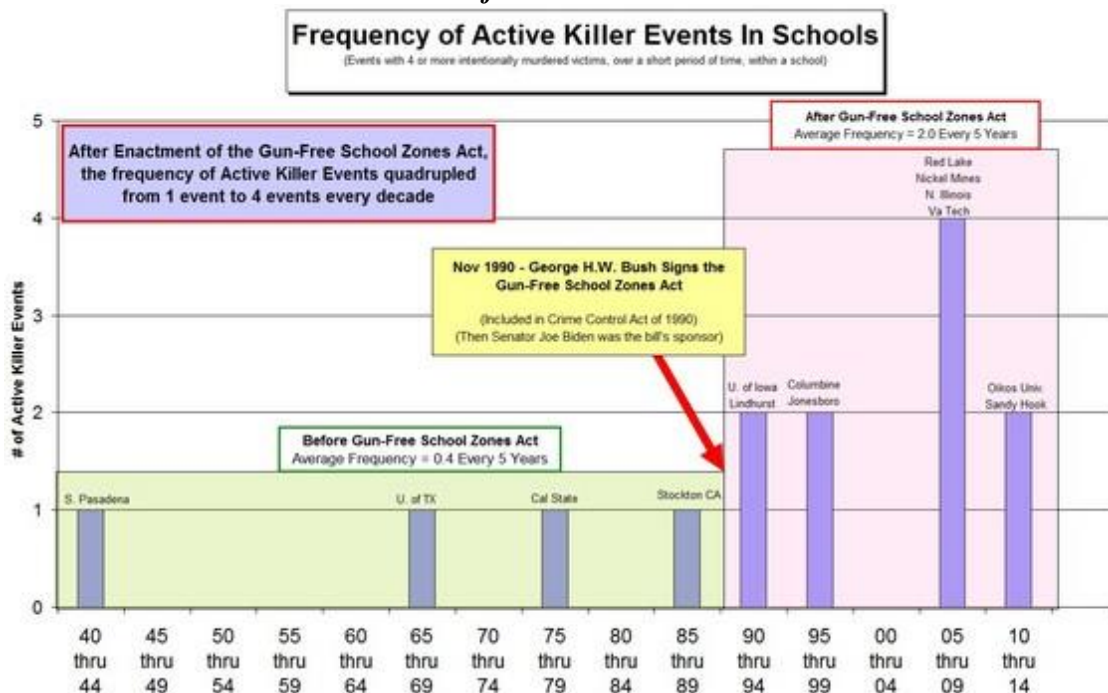
- Roughly 17 million Americans have concealed handgun permits, amounting to 8.5 percent of the adult population outside of permit-unfriendly California and New York. Nobody knows whether the person next to them might have a gun, except in the rare cases it is needed.

A comprehensive plan from U.S. Congressman Thomas Massey (R-KY) was introduced through H.R. 3200, which would effectively repeal the Gun-Free School Zone Act of 1990. Massey’s H.R. 3200 would undo the GFSZA, which currently makes it “*unlawful for any individual knowingly to possess a firearm at a place that the individual knows, or has reasonable cause to believe, is a school zone.*” The Supreme Court found the GFSZA unconstitutional in 1995, which prompted Congress to amend the bill in 1996, however the Supreme Court has not ruled on the constitutionality of the amended Act as of yet.

“*Gun-free school zones are ineffective.*” says Rep. Massey, “*They make people less safe by inviting criminals into target rich, no-risk environments. Gun-free zones prevent law abiding citizens from protecting themselves and create vulnerable populations that are targeted by criminals.*”

Massey also said, “*... Weapons bans and gun-free zones are unconstitutional. They do not and cannot prevent criminals or the mentally ill from committing acts of violence, but they often prevent victims of such violence from protecting themselves.*”

**The chart below shows the essence of these issues:**



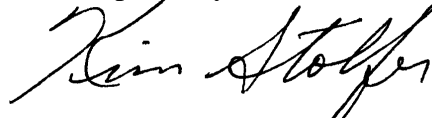
**Schools aren’t the exception; they are the rule.** The FBI’s [response to an active shooter situation](#) is strong citizen awareness and strict adherence to the “Run, Hide, Fight” protocol, which is also endorsed by all other federal agencies. Many states are reexamining the decades old prejudices in regard to allowing armed teachers and staff to be able to “Defend and Protect”.

Parents have always fiercely protected their children but unlike our ancestors, we find ourselves needing to protect them from a different type of schoolyard bully, a different type of threat in the hallways. As parents, we must stand up and tell our Representatives that we need our schools to be policed by law-abiding citizens; parents, teachers and school officials willing to conceal carry for our children’s protection.

In closing, once again, we respectfully request your support and vote for SB 621 PN 1009. We will be watching and grading votes on this legislation and thank you for your attention to this most important matter.

Thank you for your time and attention to this important issue!

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Stolfer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kim Stolfer, President

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