



NRA

**NRA PRESS CONFERENCE
DECEMBER 21, 2012**

WAYNE LAPIERRE

The National Rifle Association's 4 million mothers, fathers, sons and daughters join the nation in horror, outrage, grief and earnest prayer for the families of Newtown, Connecticut ... who suffered such incomprehensible loss as a result of this unspeakable crime.

Out of respect for those grieving families, and until the facts are known, the NRA has refrained from comment. While some have tried to exploit tragedy for political gain, we have remained respectfully silent.

Now, we *must* speak ... for the safety of our nation's children. Because for all the noise and anger directed at us over the past week, no one — nobody — has addressed the most important, pressing and immediate question we face: How do we protect our children *right now*, starting today, in a way that we know *works*?

The only way to answer that question is to face up to the *truth*. Politicians pass laws for Gun-Free School Zones. They issue press releases *bragging* about them. They post signs *advertising* them.

And in so doing, they tell every insane killer in America that schools are their *safest* place to inflict maximum mayhem with minimum risk.

How have our nation's priorities gotten so far out of order? Think about it. We care about our money, so we protect our banks with armed guards. American airports, office buildings, power plants, courthouses — even sports stadiums — are all protected by armed security.

We care about the President, so we protect him with armed Secret Service agents. Members of Congress work in offices surrounded by armed Capitol Police officers.

Yet when it comes to the most beloved, innocent and vulnerable members of the American family — our children — we as a society leave them *utterly defenseless*, and the monsters and predators of this world know it and exploit it. That must change now!

The truth is that our society is populated by an unknown number of genuine monsters — people so deranged, so evil, so possessed by voices and driven by demons that no sane person can possibly *ever* comprehend them. They walk among us every day. And does anybody really believe that the next Adam Lanza isn't planning his attack on a school he's already identified *at this very moment*?

How many *more* copycats are waiting in the wings for their moment of fame — from a national media machine that *rewards* them with the wall-to-wall attention and sense of identity that they crave — while provoking others to try to make *their* mark?

A dozen more killers? A hundred? More? How can we possibly even *guess* how many, given our nation's refusal to create an active national database of the mentally ill?

And the fact is, that wouldn't even begin to address the much larger and more lethal *criminal* class: Killers, robbers, rapists and drug gang members who have spread like cancer in every community in this country. Meanwhile, federal gun prosecutions have decreased by 40% — to the lowest levels in a decade.

So now, due to a declining willingness to prosecute dangerous criminals, violent crime is *increasing* again for the first time in 19 years! Add another hurricane, terrorist attack or some other natural or man-made disaster, and you've got a recipe for a national *nightmare* of violence and victimization.

And here's another dirty little truth that the media try their best to conceal: There exists in this country a callous, corrupt and *corrupting* shadow industry that sells, and sows, violence against its own people.

Through vicious, violent video games with names like Bulletstorm, Grand Theft Auto, Mortal Kombat and Splatterhouse. And here's one: it's called Kindergarten Killers. It's been online for 10 years. How come my research department could find it and all of yours either couldn't or didn't want anyone to know you had found it?

Then there's the blood-soaked slasher films like "American Psycho" and "Natural Born Killers" that are aired like propaganda loops on "Splatterdays" and every day, and a thousand music videos that portray life as a joke and murder as a way of life. And then they have the nerve to call it "entertainment."

But is that what it *really* is? Isn't fantasizing about killing people as a way to get your kicks really the filthiest form of pornography?

In a race to the bottom, media conglomerates *compete* with one another to shock, violate and offend every standard of civilized society by bringing an ever-more-toxic mix of reckless behavior and criminal cruelty into our homes — every minute of every day of every month of every year.

A child growing up in America witnesses 16,000 murders and 200,000 acts of violence by the time he or she reaches the ripe old age of 18.

And throughout it all, too many in our national media ... their corporate owners ... and their stockholders ... act as silent enablers, if not complicit co-conspirators. Rather than face their own moral failings, the media *demonize* lawful gun owners, *amplify* their cries for more laws and fill the national debate with misinformation and dishonest thinking that only delay meaningful action and all but guarantee that the next atrocity is only a news cycle away.

The media call semi-automatic firearms "machine guns" — they claim these civilian semi-automatic firearms are used by the military, and they tell us that the .223 round is one of the most powerful rifle

calibers ... when all of these claims are factually *untrue*. They don't know what they're talking about!

Worse, they perpetuate the dangerous notion that *one more gun ban* — or one more law imposed on peaceful, lawful people — will protect us where 20,000 others have failed!

As brave, heroic and self-sacrificing as those teachers were in those classrooms, and as prompt, professional and well-trained as those police were when they responded, they were unable — through no fault of their own — to stop it.

As parents, we do everything we can to keep our children safe. It is now time for us to assume responsibility for their safety at school. The only way to stop a monster from killing our kids is to be personally involved and invested in a plan of absolute protection. The *only* thing that stops a *bad* guy with a gun is a *good* guy with a gun. Would you rather have your 911 call bring a good guy with a gun from *a mile* away ... or *a minute* away?

Now, I can imagine the shocking headlines you'll print tomorrow morning: "*More guns,*" you'll claim, "*are the NRA's answer to everything!*" Your implication will be that guns are evil and have no place in society, much less in our schools. But since when did the word "gun" automatically become a bad word?

A gun in the hands of a Secret Service agent protecting the President isn't a bad word. A gun in the hands of *a* soldier protecting the United States isn't a bad word. And when you hear the glass breaking in your

living room at 3 a.m. and call 911, you won't be able to pray hard enough for a gun in the hands of a good guy to get there fast enough to protect you.

So why is the idea of a gun *good* when it's used to protect our President or our country or our police, but *bad* when it's used to protect our children in their schools?

They're *our kids*. They're *our responsibility*. And it's not just our *duty* to protect them — it's our *right* to protect them.

You know, five years ago, after the Virginia Tech tragedy, when I said we should put armed security in every school, the media called me crazy. But what if, when Adam Lanza started shooting his way into Sandy Hook Elementary School last Friday, he had been confronted by qualified, armed security?

Will you at least admit it's *possible* that 26 innocent lives might have been spared? Is that so abhorrent to you that you would rather continue to risk the alternative?

Is the press and political class here in Washington so consumed by fear and hatred of the NRA and America's gun owners that you're willing to accept a world where real resistance to evil monsters is a lone, unarmed school principal left to *surrender her life* to shield the children in her care? No one — regardless of personal political prejudice — has the right to impose that sacrifice.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is no national, one-size-fits-all solution to protecting our children. But do know this President *zeroed out* school emergency planning grants in *last year's* budget, and scrapped "Secure Our Schools" *policing* grants in *next year's* budget.

With all the foreign aid, with all the money in the federal budget, we can't afford to put *a police officer in every school*? Even if they did that, politicians have no business — and no authority — denying us the right, the ability, or the moral imperative to protect ourselves and our loved ones from harm.

Now, the National Rifle Association knows that there are millions of qualified active and retired police; active, reserve and retired military; security professionals; certified firefighters and rescue personnel; and an extraordinary corps of patriotic, trained qualified citizens to join with local school officials and police in devising a protection plan for every school. We can deploy them to protect our kids *now*. We can immediately make America's schools safer — relying on the brave men and women of America's police force.

The budget of our local police departments are strained and resources are limited, but their dedication and courage are second to none and they can be deployed right now.

I call on Congress today to act immediately, to appropriate whatever is necessary to put armed police officers in every school — and to do it now, to make sure that blanket of safety is in place when our children return to school in January.

Before Congress reconvenes, before we engage in any lengthy debate over legislation, regulation or anything else, as soon as our kids return to school after the holiday break, we need to have *every single school in America* immediately deploy a protection program proven to work — and by that I mean *armed security*.

Right now, today, every school in the United States should plan meetings with parents, school administrators, teachers and local authorities — and draw upon every resource available — to erect a cordon of protection around our kids right now. Every school will have a different solution based on its own unique situation.

Every school in America needs to immediately *identify, dedicate* and *deploy* the resources necessary to put these security forces in place right now. And the National Rifle Association, as America's preeminent trainer of law enforcement and security personnel for the past 50 years, is ready, willing and uniquely qualified to help.

Our training programs are the most advanced in the world. That expertise must be brought to bear to protect our schools and our children now. We did it for the nation's defense industries and military installations during World War II, and we'll do it for our schools today.

The NRA is going to bring all of its knowledge, dedication and resources to develop a model National School Shield Emergency Response Program for every school that wants it. From armed security to building design and access control to information technology to student and teacher training, this multi-faceted program will be developed by the very best experts in their fields.

Former Congressman Asa Hutchinson will lead this effort as National Director of the National School Shield Program, with a budget provided by the NRA of whatever scope the task requires. His experience as a U.S. Attorney, Director of the Drug Enforcement Agency and Undersecretary of the Department of Homeland Security will give him the knowledge and expertise to hire the most knowledgeable and credentialed experts available anywhere, to get this program up and running from the first day forward.

If we truly cherish our kids more than our money or our celebrities, we must give them the greatest level of protection possible and the security that is only available with a *properly trained — armed — good guy*.

Under Asa's leadership, our team of security experts will make this the best program in the world for protecting our children at school, and we will make that program available to every school in America *free of charge*.

That's a plan of action that *can*, and *will*, make a real, positive and indisputable difference in the safety of our children — starting right now.

There'll be time for talk and debate *later*. This is the time, this is the day for decisive *action*.

We can't wait for the next unspeakable crime to happen before we act. We can't lose precious time debating legislation that won't work. We

mustn't allow politics or personal prejudice to divide us.
We must act now.

For the sake of the safety of every child in America, I call on every parent, every teacher, every school administrator and every law enforcement officer in this country to join us in the National School Shield Program and protect our children with the only line of positive defense that's tested and proven to work.

And now, to tell you more about the program, I'd like to introduce the head of that effort — a former U.S. congressman, former U.S. Attorney for the Western District of Arkansas and former administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Honorable Asa Hutchinson.

ASA HUTCHINSON

Thank you, Wayne.

One of the first responsibilities I learned at Homeland Security was the importance of protecting our nation's critical infrastructure, and there is nothing more critical to our nation's well being than our children's safety. They are this country's future and her most precious resource.

We all understand that our children should be safe in school, but it is also essential that the parents have confidence in that safety. As a result of the tragedy in Newtown, Connecticut, that confidence has been shattered. Assurance of school safety must be restored with a sense of urgency.

That is why I am grateful that the NRA has asked me to lead a team of security experts to assist our schools, parents and communities. I took this assignment on one condition: That my team of experts will be independent and will be guided solely by what are the best security solutions for the safety of our children while at school.

Even though we are just starting this process, I envision this initiative will have two key elements: First, it would be based on a model security plan -- a comprehensive strategy for school security based on the latest, most up-to-date technical information from the foremost experts in their fields.

This model security plan will serve as a template — a set of best practices, principles and guidelines that every school in America can tweak, if needed, and tailor to their own set of circumstances.

Every school and community is different, but this model security plan will allow every school to choose among its various components to develop a school safety strategy that fits their own unique situation, whether it's a large urban school, a small rural school or anything in between.

Armed, trained, qualified school security personnel will be one element of that plan, but by no means the *only* element. If a school decides for whatever reason that it doesn't want or need armed security personnel, that of course is a decision to be made by parents at the local level.

The second point I want to make is that this will be a program that doesn't depend on massive funding from local authorities or the federal government. Instead, it'll make use of local volunteers serving in their own communities.

In my home state of Arkansas, my son was a volunteer with a local group called "Watchdog Dads," who volunteer their time at schools to patrol playgrounds and provide a measure of added security.

Whether they're retired police, retired military or rescue personnel, I think there are people in every community in this country, who would be happy to serve, if only someone asked them and gave them the training and certification to do so.

The National Rifle Association is the natural, obvious choice to sponsor this program. Their gun safety, marksmanship and hunter education programs have set the standard for well over a century. Over the past 25 years, their Eddie Eagle Gunsafe Program has taught over 26 million kids that real guns aren't toys and, today, child gun accidents are at the lowest levels ever recorded.

School safety is a complex issue with no simple, single solution. But I believe trained, qualified, armed security is one key component among many that can provide the first line of deterrence as well as the last line of defense. And I welcome the opportunity to serve in this vital, potentially lifesaving effort.

Thank you very much.