INSIDE
SCHOOL SHOOTINGS
WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED

presented by CONCEALED CARRY MAGAZINE
Several months after the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut, my 7-year-old son asked me if I thought something like that could happen at his school, which happens to be a private Catholic school in my home city. I assured him that nothing like that would ever happen here, and that even if a bad guy did get into his school, our police department was so good and so fast that they would stop the bad guy be-
fore he hurt anyone. Of course, I was lying to him. I feel a bit more confident in my answers when I assure my son that terrorists will never again take over airplanes and fly them into buildings, but for that answer, I have a bit more to fall back on considering the response the nation took after 9/11 compared to its response after Newtown. After 9/11, the U.S. met the threat by installing sophisticated body scanners at airports, hardening cockpit doors with impenetrable steel, creating an Armed Pilot program and expanding the armed Air Marshal program. The terrorists of 9/11 were fairly confident that if they couldn’t bluff their way into the cockpit, they’d be able to breach the door, where they’d find a defenseless crew tucked into their very own “gun-free zone.” Today, Al-Qaeda and ISIS know that even if a cockpit door could be breached (however unlikely), the terrorist’s last memory might well be a muzzle flash as an armed pilot shoots him in the face. A 9/11 response was needed after Newtown, but today, most of our schools remain as unprotected as they were the day before the Newtown tragedy, as was demonstrated in February 2018 as 17 students and faculty members were gunned down at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. Proposed solutions range from banning AR-15s and limiting magazine capacity to no more than 10 rounds to creating an armed teacher program and eliminating gun-free zones. In this article, I’ll be looking at each of those proposed solutions in great detail, and I’ll also look at whether victim response has affected the outcome at any shooting, positively or negatively. I’ll summarize this article with a four-point plan designed to eliminate the scourge of these murderers once and for all.

To start, let’s take a look at the magazine capacity argument.

IS MAGAZINE CAPACITY THE REAL KILLER?

It seems that before the blood is dry after mass shootings, the anti-gun movement renews their rallying cry that the reason these monsters are able to murder so many victims in a short period of time is because of the rate of fire enabled by magazine capacities larger than five or 10 rounds and by the nature of semi-automatic firearms. So that begs the question: Exactly how many rounds can be fired per minute when using magazine capacities of five rounds, 10 rounds or 30 rounds, and would a smaller magazine size have affected the outcome at any mass shooting? To answer the first half of that question, let’s look at the theoretical maximum rate of fire attainable with three different-sized magazines. The table on this page shows how many rounds can be fired per minute using a moderate rate of fire of two rounds per second, and a moderate magazine change rate of three seconds. I’ll add that someone with practice would be able to fire at about twice this rate. As you can see, the table shows that reducing a magazine capacity by two-thirds doesn’t reduce the rate of fire by two-thirds; of course, it simply means that more magazine changes are required per minute. The actual reduction in rate of fire when going from a 30-round magazine to a 10-round magazine is about 25 percent.

Having those baseline numbers, the “it’s the magazine” crowd would have a strong argument if it could be demonstrated that mass shooters were firing at a rate of fire of 100 rounds per minute or more, but, unfortunately for them, the facts don’t support that argument. The table on the next page shows the actual rate of fire in the five most notorious school shootings, including the most recent school shooting in Parkland, Florida. That table clearly shows that, in every single case, the shooters were using a rate of fire far below the theoretical limit of even five-round magazines. That same rate of fire is reflected in other mass shootings outside of schools, including those in San Bernardino, Fort Hood, Aurora and Charleston. In fact, only one single mass shooter in history has even approached the theoretical limit of 30-round magazines. In October 2017, 64-year-old Stephen Paddock fired 1,100 rounds in 10 minutes from an elevated position overlooking the Las Vegas strip with the aid of a “bump stock” designed to mimic the speed of automatic fire. Due to the use of that device and the fact that Paddock was firing from an elevated position at a crowd of more than 13,000 people, this shooting tends to fit into its own category. In fact, it might remain a category of one; at the time of publication, the Trump administration had directed
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shooter</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Dead</th>
<th>Rounds Fired</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Rounds per Minute</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nikolas Cruz</td>
<td>Parkland, Florida</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>6 minutes</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seung-Hui Cho</td>
<td>Blacksburg, Virginia</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>174</td>
<td>11 minutes</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adam Lanza</td>
<td>Newtown, Connecticut</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>5-9 minutes</td>
<td>17-31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold</td>
<td>Columbine, Colorado</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>47 minutes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Harper-Mercer</td>
<td>Roseburg, Oregon</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>9 minutes</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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the Justice Department to ban bump stocks and other devices that allow semi-automatic firearms to mimic automatic fire.

**WHAT WE’VE LEARNED**

Let’s state these facts with a little perspective. Adam Lanza (the Newtown shooter) fired at a rate of fire no faster than a 150-year-old lever-action Henry rifle, popular among Union soldiers during the Civil War, even though Lanza had 10 30-round magazines and an AR-15. Nidal Malik Hasan (the Fort Hood shooter) was a third slower than that, while Seung-Hui Cho (the Virginia Tech shooter) and Nikolas Cruz (the Parkland, Florida, shooter) were 50 percent slower. Even the San Bernardino shooters, who carried AR-15s and 30-round magazines, fired at a rate no faster than one round every 3.3 seconds, which is 40 percent slower than the lever-action Henry. James Holmes (the Aurora, Colorado, theater shooter) fired at a rate no faster than a 170-year-old, single-shot Sharps rifle, developed 13 years before the Civil War began, even though Holmes had a 100-round magazine. Keep in mind, the Sharps rifle has a capacity of one round, or 99 rounds fewer than Holmes had in his magazine. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold (the Columbine shooters) fired at a rate no faster than the 240-year-old muzzle-loading flintlock Kentucky rifle favored by the American patriots in the Revolutionary War, while Christopher Mercer (the Umqua Community College shooter) was even slower than that.

So here’s the problem with the magazine capacity argument: These killers are not using a high rate of fire; they’re not even using a moderate rate of fire. Their rate of fire could be described as sluggish, no faster than a lever-action or bolt-action rifle. But that begs the question, why is their rate of fire so slow? The answer is a simple one: When you’re alone with your victims in an enclosed area and you’re the only one with a gun, a rate of fire any faster would only mean misses.

**ARE AR-15s TO BLAME?**

When a mass shooter chooses an AR-15 as his firearm of choice, it’s usually referred to as a “high-powered” or “military-style” rifle by the media, implying that it’s more powerful (and more deadly) than more commonly available rifles, such as those used for hunting deer. Let’s find out if that’s correct or whether it’s another red herring. The answer might just redefine
what the media considers a “high-powered” rifle to be.
Below, I’ve shown the round fired by the AR-15 in its actual size, alongside the three most popular deer hunting rounds, also shown in their actual sizes. Which of the four rounds do you think is fired by the AR-15? If you guessed one of the three larger rounds on the right, you’d be wrong. The AR-15 round is actually the smallest round on the far left, which is the Remington .223. The three rounds on the right are the three most popular deer hunting rounds, including the .30-30 Winchester, the .308 Winchester and the .30-06 Springfield, respectively. The fact is, the AR-15 round isn’t just physically smaller, it also falls dramatically below those popular deer hunting rounds in kinetic energy, and well below the kinetic energy of a 12-gauge 000 buck-shot.
After every mass shooting, gun-rights organizations point the finger at the existence of “gun-free zones,” while gun-control advocates call for even more locations to be declared “gun-free” in an attempt to end mass shootings. So who is correct? For their part, gun-control advocates have done much to try to dispel the notion that these killers seek out schools or other locations that ban guns. One anti-gun group even tried to dismiss the argument that Fort Hood was a “gun-free zone” by claiming that the base police who flooded the area and exchanged fire with shooter Nidal Malik Hasan proved that Fort Hood was not a “gun-free zone” after all. But claiming that arriving police means an area isn’t a “gun-free zone” (even though soldiers on base were barred from carrying personal firearms by base policy) is not a valid argument. Instead, let’s look at the data.

The data tells us that since Columbine, and up to and including the terrorist attacks in San Bernardino and Orlando and the shooting in Parkland, Florida, 50 mass shootings have occurred, with 74 percent of them falling in “gun-free zones,” where civilians were disarmed by state law, school policy, federal law or policy, or by private policy. It’s worth noting nearly 48 percent of the locations where mass shootings occurred were self-declared “gun-free zones,” where no law barred civilians from protecting themselves with firearms but institutional policy did declare such a ban. In most cases, it’s a university or corporate lawyer who suggests the ban as a way of avoiding liability if a shooting or an accident were to occur. But, after looking at the data, those lawyers might want to reevaluate their idea of what liability means.

As mentioned, 74 percent of the mass shootings since Columbine have occurred in “gun-free zones,” but those shootings were responsible for 85 percent of the deaths. That trend in the data clearly indicates that mass shooters actively seek out soft targets while avoiding hardened targets. Signs, school policies, corporate policies, state statutes, glass doors, unlocked doors and unarmed victims do not create hardened targets. What those things create instead is the perfect environment for these deranged individuals to successfully carry out their plans. In the “gun-free zones” of our nation’s schools, these shooters don’t just believe, they know that a counter-attack will only come from the outside, and they’ll get a loud and dramatic warning of the upcoming counter-counter-attack as they hear sirens approaching from all directions. Those sirens tell them that they have at least another four minutes or more to kill any remaining victims before police will enter the building. Again, they know that no counter-attack will be launched from within the school walls. It isn’t just what they believe; it’s what they
know to be true. And so do we. If we change the environment, we stand a chance at changing their plans.

DOES VICTIM RESPONSE MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

The next item that we'll be looking at is how victim response affects the outcome. To do that, let's begin by looking at one of the most infamous school shootings: Virginia Tech.

As seen in the table shown earlier, Cho wasn't depending upon a high rate of fire to complete his mission. In fact, his rate of fire was half of what Union soldiers achieved with the lever-action Henry rifle. But Cho knew that no armed response would come from within the walls of the university building where he chose to take his stand; he knew that an armed response would only come from outside the school walls, so a high rate of fire wasn't important to him. Skill with his two handguns was also unimportant. Cho legally purchased the handguns he used during his attack — one in February and the second in March. His attack occurred in April. No evidence exists that Cho had taken any firearms training or had any significant practice with his firearms before the attack.

So, if Cho wasn't depending upon a high rate of fire or shooting skill, what was he depending upon? During his 11-minute siege, Cho entered or attempted to enter five separate classrooms, as shown in the diagram on the next page. You'll note that the classrooms are grouped by how the students responded to Cho's attack. Group 1 shows classrooms where the students and professors proactively defended their classrooms from the outset by barricading the doors. Group 2 shows classrooms that did not proactively mount a defense during any moment of the attack. Group 3 shows classrooms where students failed to initially form a defense but who regrouped and then actively worked to barricade their classroom doors. This diagram clearly shows that the outcome was not consistent among the five classrooms and that, when students and their professors actively mounted a defense, their chances of survival dramatically improved — and not by just a small margin. This is a classic example of how mass shooters will switch from one set of targets to another set of targets. The students in Classroom 205 didn't need to disable or kill Cho; all they needed to do was delay his entry long enough for him to become frustrated and move on to a new set of targets. Cho knew the clock was ticking, and he wasn't about to waste more than a few seconds trying to gain access to any one classroom. The result was that everyone in Classroom 205 lived.

DEFENSIVE VERSUS OFFENSIVE RESPONSE

Although the students and professors in classrooms 204, 205 and 207 took (or eventually took) defensive action by barricading their classroom doors, no evidence exists showing that any student in any classroom took offensive measures, such as throwing objects at Cho, striking him with objects or attempting to tackle him.

One student from Classroom 211 was even quoted as saying that he was “waiting for it to be his turn” to be shot.

Although that student heard Cho reload three times (in fact, Cho reloaded 15 times total), the student failed to use the opportunity to flee the classroom or to make a counterattack on Cho, and instead decided to continue to wait for it to be “his turn” to die.

Please understand that I am not trying to blame the victims by this analysis. Instead, I'm simply attempting to understand what we might take away from the volumes of data that were recorded about this incident. The fact is, with no training at home or at school about what to do in the event of a mass shooting, it's unrealistic to expect the average student to come up with a plan at the moment the gunfire erupts. That lack of training is one of four major points of failure at Virginia Tech, and it continues to be a failure point at other school shootings, including the most recent shooting in Parkland, Florida.

WHEN VICTIMS FIGHT BACK AND WIN

So how about mass shootings where the victims did fight back offensively? In case after case, it can be shown that an active response by bystanders can end these mass shootings early, effectively saving countless lives. Examples include:

- **May 21, 1998, Thurston High School, Springfield, Oregon** — Recently suspended student Kip Kinkel enters the school with two pistols and a .22-caliber rifle. Kinkel fires a total of 50 rounds from his rifle, strik-
ing 37 people and killing two. When Kinkel attempts to reload, student Jacob Ryker, who has already been wounded, tackles Kinkel, and six other students join in to assist. The seven students restrain Kinkel until police arrive on the scene. Although Kinkel was carrying a total of 1,127 rounds of ammunition, the proactive and aggressive counter-attack by students ended the attack after Kinkel had fired less than 5 percent of his total ammunition supply.

· Jan. 16, 2002, Appalachian School of Law, Grundy, Virginia — Shooter Peter Odighizuwa shoots and kills a student and two faculty members but is then stopped by students Tracy Bridges and Mikael Gross, who had retrieved their personal firearms from their vehicles.

· Dec. 9, 2007, New Life Church, Colorado Springs — Shooter Matthew Murray opens fire in the church parking lot, injuring three people and killing two. After entering the church, Murray is shot multiple times by Jeanne Assam, a concealed carry permit holder and security volunteer. Police reports indicate that, after being seriously wounded by Assam, Murray killed himself with a shotgun. Police reports also indicate that Murray had more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition in his possession and that approximately 7,000 people were on the church campus at the time of the shooting. The actions of Jeanne Assam undoubtedly saved countless lives.

· Jan. 8, 2011, Tucson, Arizona — Shooter Jared Loughner fires 31 rounds into a crowd attending a constituent meeting hosted by Rep. Gabrielle Giffords at the La Toscana Village mall just outside of Tucson, Arizona. When attempting to reload, Loughner drops the magazine. While one bystander fights Loughner for the dropped magazine, three other bystanders tackle Loughner to the ground, including 74-year-old retired Army Colonel Bill Badger (who is wounded), Joseph Zamudio and Roger Sulzgeber. Although six innocent people lost their lives during this shooting, far more would have been injured or killed if it weren’t
for the proactive and aggressive actions of Loughner’s potential victims.

WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

An active response by potential victims affects the outcome. That active response might be barricading a door, fighting back or running away, but, in all cases, survival jumps exponentially. Fighting back as a team significantly affects the shooter’s ability to continue his attack. Those facts are reflected in the Department of Homeland Security’s new program on “Surviving an Active Shooter.” Never heard of the program? That’s not a surprise, because the program openly advocates fighting back, which isn’t something that the national media is likely to help promote. The program teaches that there are three things you can do that will make a difference during an attack: run, hide or fight. The Run-Hide-Fight Program teaches that, if evacuation or hiding out are not possible, then action should be taken against the shooter. The program states:

As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter by:

• Acting as aggressively as possible against him/her.
• Throwing items and improvising weapons.
• Yelling.
• Committing to your actions.

While the program doesn’t specifically take a stance one way or another on whether firearms in the hands of potential victims would change the outcome, it is significant that the Department recommends fighting back at all. Had this approach been taught to the students at Virginia Tech, it’s likely that, even if Cho hadn’t been incapacitated by his potential victims, any aggressive action on the part of the students would have disrupted Cho’s plans long enough for law enforcement to make entry. Remember that the typical length of time that mass-shooting events last is only five to nine minutes, or, in Cho’s case, 11 minutes, since he had chained and padlocked several doors. The students in classrooms 204, 206, 207 and 211 didn’t necessarily need to incapacitate Cho; all they needed to do was buy themselves several minutes of time to allow law enforcement to make their entry (as the students in Classroom 205 did).

What could they have done? As soon as it was apparent that a shooter was in the building, the students could have immediately piled tables, chairs, bookshelves or any other barrier objects in front of the door. Each student could have then picked up a chair, a book, a coffee mug, their shoes or any of the hundreds of other objects that would have been in the classroom. If Cho was able to breach the barriers and enter their classroom, the students could have thrown these objects at his head and torso, screaming at the top of their lungs, committing to their actions until the threat was over. If Cho went down still in possession of his firearms, the students could have beaten him into unconsciousness with chairs or their fists. Sound pretty brutal? The alternative wasn’t just brutal; it was the deaths of 30 innocent people in Norris Hall.

WHAT SHOULD CHANGE?

Now that we’ve dispelled the myths that magazine capacity or firearm type have anything to do with the outcome and demonstrated that victim response can directly affect the outcome, let’s look at a four-point plan designed to eliminate the scourge of school shooters once and for all.

POINT NO. 1: HARDEN SCHOOL AND CLASSROOM DOORS

Let’s face it: The security at most of our nation’s schools is not just poor … it’s abysmal. Years after the tragedies at Sandy Hook and Virginia Tech, if you were to ask your local school administrators the types of questions on my school security checklist on the next page, you’d most likely receive an answer of “no” for every question (or a look of embarrassment). While we don’t necessarily have the money to institute airport-level security at school entrances, we do have the money to plug these major gaps in security. If you are a parent or a teacher, take a copy of this checklist to your school and ask your school administrators to answer these questions. Unless every answer is a resounding “yes,” you’ll need to make the argument that these items can no longer be delayed or ignored. Lives literally depend on it.

Although all of the items on the checklist are important, simply hardening up the main entrances of schools will have an effect. FEMA reported that 74 percent of mass shooters enter their target zone through the front door, as was done at most of the school shootings I profiled earlier. Although Sandy
Hook Elementary did have a “security door” blocking entry from the lobby to the interior of the school, that security door was made of glass. While it was good for appearances, it had no effect on actually stopping shooter Adam Lanza as he shot his way through it.

Other good intentions that ultimately failed at Sandy Hook included the fact that a lockdown was never called from the front office, predominantly due to the fact that the shooting began just outside the office doors. That indicates that schools must have multiple methods of ordering a lockdown, which might include launching a prerecorded message initiated by pressing a necklace fob worn by multiple staff throughout the school.

The final failure at Sandy Hook was the most devastating. Although all of the classrooms did have lockable doors, the locks required that a key be used, even when locking the door from the inside. In the aftermath, it was discovered that all of the classroom doors were locked, except for Classrooms 8 and 10, the two classrooms where Lanza murdered the majority of his victims, and that keys were found on the floor next to one of the murdered teachers. Any delay in locking the classroom doors could be fatal, and looking for a key creates just such a delay.

Lockdown drills must not only be procedurally correct, they must also be fast. How fast? A good test for every teacher in every school would be to see how quickly a healthy runner could sprint from the closest school entrance to your classroom. If that can be done in five seconds, then you have four seconds to get your students into the classroom and secure the door.

While the defensive measures listed in the checklist might sound ineffective (a determined attacker should be able to eventually breach a locked door, right?), remember that school shooters know that they’ll have just five to nine minutes to complete their attack before the police will make entry. Delaying a shooter for even one to two minutes is enough to force the shooter to move on to try a different target or to end his or her own life.

The students in Classroom 205 at Virginia Tech didn’t need to delay shooter Seung-Hui Cho for hours (or even minutes for that matter). When Cho was unable to breach the door that students had barricaded with tables, he gave up in seconds and moved back to the classrooms where no such barricades had been erected. If Virginia Tech had installed deadbolts and backup locks on their classroom doors, it’s very likely that every student in classrooms 204, 207 and 211 would have survived, and — if the school had instituted Point No. 2 — it’s very likely that many of the students in Classroom 206 (the first room attacked) would have survived as well.
POINT NO. 2: TEACH STUDENTS TO FIGHT BACK

During lockdown drills, students must be taught to do more than simply huddle on one side of the classroom. Instead, they must be taught to fight back — and fight back aggressively — if a shooter enters their classroom. During lockdown drills, schools must implement (or teachers can improvise) counter-attack plans by instructing students to spread out and to pick up objects and hold them back in a “thrower’s stance” in preparation for an attacker making entry. For younger kids, the objects might be books, staplers, their shoes or glue sticks. Older students should be taught to pick up chairs or other heavier objects. Any object thrown at an attacker will break his momentum, which might cause him to back out of the classroom. Schools should go as far as acting through simulated counter-attacks by providing students with soft rubber objects that can be thrown at mock attackers making entry through the door. Not only would that exercise make lockdown drills less frightening, it would also begin to build the proper neural pathways that not only is fighting back OK, it is necessary and expected. For junior high through college kids, students should be taught to defend and attack as a team, by immediately locking the door and barricading it with the designated cabinet or bookshelf, and striking the shooter with hardened objects to the head and torso if he makes entry. If you’re a teacher, you’ll also need to include a baseball bat or other incapacitating tool in your classroom. If a shooter enters your classroom, you not only have the legal right, you have the moral obligation to use deadly force to stop him. Huddling with your kids on one side of the classroom whispering, “Everything is going to be OK” is not living up to that obligation.

POINT NO. 3: ARMING EDUCATORS

If we really want to stop school shooters in their tracks, we must institute an Armed Educator program, similar to the Armed Pilot program. Allowing school staff to carry concealed firearms as official security is a sensitive topic, so I’m ready to propose a number of compromises on the issue, including:

- Requiring weapons retention and advanced handgun training in addition to state-mandated concealed carry training for participants in the program. This could be modeled after the Armed Pilot program but should not require more than two weeks of training.
- Passing a physical agility test to enter the program.
- Securing firearms in Level III holsters to minimize the fear that unruly students might attempt to grab the firearms.
- In addition to including traditional firearms and ammunition in the program, I’d propose that Simunition firearms and ammunition be included as well. This option would certainly attract more educators into the program, and mass shooters are unlikely to know the difference between the sound of or pain inflicted by Simunition rounds versus live rounds. (If you’ve ever been hit by a Simunition round, you know what I mean.) We need to keep in mind what the end game of each of these shooters is: The moment he believes a counter-attack is occurring, he’ll break off the attack or end his own life.

Interestingly, there might be another significant benefit of allowing educators to choose Simunition firearms over traditional firearms: Knowing that they will only inflict pain rather than death (on the shooter or innocent bystanders), they might be much more likely to immediately commit to a response rather than hesitating as they might with traditional firearms and ammunition. Picture what might have changed at Sandy Hook if Principal Dawn Hochsprung and School Psychologist Mary Sherlach had closed in on Lanza, firing Simunition rounds at his head and torso as fast as their fingers could pull the triggers instead of simply shouting, “Stay put!” as Principal Hochsprung was reported to have done. Lanza would have ended his life immediately or he would have collapsed into the fetal position as his body was wracked with impact after painful impact. Even if Lanza had recovered his senses long enough to continue his attack, the disrup-
tion of his momentum would certainly have bought the teachers in Classrooms 8 and 10 enough time to lock their doors, and it could have bought the police the few minutes they needed to make entry.

So why haven’t we implemented a program like this already? It’s because the anti-gun crowd and liberal politicians (is there a difference?) want you to believe that a physically fit teacher wearing a Level III holster who’s been trained in weapons retention and use of force is more dangerous to your children than a school shooter who walks through the front door loaded down with multiple firearms and hundreds of rounds of ammunition. We need to disagree.

**POINT NO. 4: END ‘GUN-FREE ZONE’ POLICIES AT SCHOOLS**

Finally, we need to reverse public policies and public statements of schools as “gun-free zones” once and for all. While the Armed Educator program takes a massive step in this direction, our ultimate goal (which, admittedly, will require more time) needs to be the elimination of schools from the “banned location” lists on state concealed carry laws and the repeal of the “Gun-Free School Zones Act” of 1990. The “No Guns Allowed” sign is what drew Aurora theater shooter James Holmes to that particular theater, when other theaters were closer to his home, and our nation’s schools all carry that same virtual blinking neon light stating, “No one in here will be able to stop you.” Which sign do you think would cause these mass shooters to reconsider their plans: a “No Guns Allowed” sign taped to a glass door or a sign declaring, “Multiple armed personnel on the property will use deadly force to protect our children and our staff” taped to a reinforced steel door?

Now the reality check: Nothing will convince school boards to institute any of my four points, so here is my plan to stack the argument in our favor. I’d like to challenge every concealed carry instructor in the country to do three things. First, offer a free class at least once per year to any teacher, school administrator, school staff member or school board member who is willing to learn. Second, if you have school-aged children, let it be known that you’re a concealed carry instructor and provide an open invitation for any parent at your children’s school to take a class from you for free.

What’s more likely to stop a shooter: a “No Guns Allowed” sign taped to a glass door or a sign declaring, “Armed personnel on the premises will use deadly force to protect our students and staff” taped to a steel-reinforced door?
You might give up a few dollars, but you’ll be doing your school an incredible service. Third, include the data points from this article in every class you teach. I’ve captured everything in this series in a PowerPoint presentation — email me at michael@uscca.com and it’s yours. I’m a huge believer that education is key to winning this argument, and if we educate from within, the blanket statements of “guns in schools are bad” or “we need to balance security with access” are going to begin sounding more and more ridiculous. The more teachers and parents who are educated with these facts, the more likely it is that one or more of them will stand up and hit the B.S. buzzer the next time they hear, “It’s the magazines” at their next PTA or teacher development workshop.

At those types of meetings, the typical argument from school administrators against securing schools and allowing armed personnel on the premises is two-fold: 1. Schools need to balance security versus access, and 2. Armed personnel will scare children. Those arguments are bunk. No one makes the “access versus security” argument about airplane cockpits or the secure area of airports. Children also know the difference between a gun in the hands of a bad guy and a gun in the hands of a good guy (and teachers are included in kids’ versions of a “good guy” list). A gun in the hands of a bad guy equals danger, while a gun in the hands of a good guy equals safety. Similarly, children aren’t afraid of lockable doors or other active security measures. Those things say, “This place is secure. You’ll be safe here.” A trip through security and the sight of armed police at the airport doesn’t frighten children; if anything, it brings on a sense of comfort, especially if your children are aware of 9/11. How secure would your children (or you) feel if the extent of airport security was a “No Guns Allowed” sign posted at each entrance and a glass cockpit door?

Finally, think about how this argument would change if it were Al-Qaeda or ISIS committing these crimes instead of unbalanced domestic terrorists. The argument of magazine capacity would dry up overnight, and any politician voting against an Armed Educator program wouldn’t have to wait until the next election to be booted from office — he or she would be thrown from office in a mass recall election supported by Republicans and Democrats.

If we implemented my four-point plan across the nation, we’d very likely find that mass shootings at schools would simply end, and here’s why: School shooters want to commit their horrible crimes and then end their lives painlessly by their own hands. That’s not just a theory of mine; the FBI agrees. Forty-two percent of all mass shooters and 70 percent of school shooters commit suicide on-site. Their planning goes something like this:

1. Record and upload a vile video to YouTube or write a rambling manifesto, explaining why they hate the world.
2. Enter a “gun-free zone” and shoot as many innocent children as they can in five to nine minutes. Continue shooting until they hear sirens.
3. Die painlessly by their own hands.

Implementing these four points will get these shooters to give up their plan entirely or just skip Part 2 and go directly to Part 3. I don’t care which route they take; I just want them to skip Part 2. When these potential murderers understand that they have no hope of breaking through secured school or classroom doors, know that their missions will end in utter failure and realize that their deaths will be agonizing as they’re shot by multiple armed school personnel, then — and only then — will this national nightmare end.
David jumped into action and saved his children and innocent bystanders from two armed robbers. Without the self-defense education, training and legal protection of USCCA Membership, David’s story could have ended very differently.

When the smoke cleared, David’s gun was confiscated, and he was taken to the police station for questioning. With his USCCA Membership, David was able to get connected with an experienced criminal defense attorney AND get the funds he needed to replace his permanently confiscated gun. After all, doing the right thing shouldn’t cost you everything...

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Self-Defense SHIELD Protection Plan Benefits are subject to certain terms, conditions, limitations and exclusions. See Membership Agreement for details.