

# [***Breaking Down Joe Biden's Claim About School Shootings; In a recent X post, Biden claimed over 400 school shootings have occurred since 1999, resulting in over 370,000 students being exposed to gun violence***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWH-N2P1-DXXD-700F-00000-00&context=1516831)

The Daily Caller

April 25, 2024 Thursday 08:38 PM EST

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**Section:** ***POLITICS***

**Length:** 1461 words

**Byline:** Christine Sellers, Fact Check Reporter, [*christine@checkyourfact.com*](mailto:christine@checkyourfact.com)

**Body**

[*Link to Image*](https://cdn01.dailycaller.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/GettyImages-2149295469-e1713896684279.jpg)

In an April 20 post [*shared on X*](https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/1781657832837824789), President Joe Biden claimed over 400 school shootings have occurred since the Columbine High School massacre in 1999, resulting in over 370,000 students being exposed to gun violence.

Since Columbine, over 400 school shootings - from Newtown to Parkland to Uvalde - have exposed over 370,000 students to the horrors of gun violence.

Students across the country now learn how to duck and cover before they learn how to read and write.

This violence must end. [*pic.twitter.com/er6SInI8Ok*](https://t.co/er6SInI8Ok)

- President Biden (@POTUS) [*April 20, 2024*](https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/1781657832837824789?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“Since Columbine, over 400 school shootings - from Newtown to Parkland to Uvalde - have exposed over 370,000 students to the horrors of gun violence. Students across the country now learn how to duck and cover before they learn how to read and write. This violence must end,” he wrote.

The claim is rooted in a Washington Post [*database*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/interactive/school-shootings-database/). The database indicates that there have been 404 school shootings have occurred since 1999, impacting more than 370,000 students. Multiple school shootings that have garnered significant media attention are counted in the list, including Sandy Hook Elementary School (2012, 420 children in school), Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School (2018, 2,930 children in school), and Robb Elementary School (2022, 500 children in school).

Other, lesser-known school shootings, such as West Nickel Mines Amish School (2006, 20 children in school), Roosevelt High School (2008, 2,540 children in school), Cape Fear High School (2011, 1,460 children in school), Arapahoe High School (2013, 2,110 children in school), Townville Elementary School (2016, 270 children in school), Saint Francis de Sales School (2021, 610 children in school), and Odessa High School (2024, 3,600 children in school) also comprise the list.

Using the same data, the outlet indicated 46 school shootings, or more than in any year, occurred in 2022. The data was compiled by the outlet based on “news articles, open-source databases, law enforcement reports, and calls to schools and police departments.” The outlet defined a school shooting as “every act of gunfire at a primary or secondary school during school hours.” With this in mind, gun-related incidents occurring at colleges and universities were excluded from the data.

“We will let the President's statement speak for itself,” a White House spokesperson told Check Your Fact. The spokesperson also pointed Check Your Fact to the Washington Post database.

Multiple experts offered their perspectives on Biden's claim with Check Your Fact.

Mark Bryant, founding executive director at [*Gun Violence Archive*](https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/), told Check Your Fact that while it is “difficult” to look at every shooting since 1999, there have been 605 shootings at elementary and high schools since the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012.

“It is difficult to look at every shooting since 1999 as nobody was doing a good count then. But I can tell you that there have been 605 shootings at elementary-high schools since Sandy Hook in December 2012 where there was an injury,” Bryant said.

“We have begun a backlog project to gather the same information that we do daily for school shooting incidents that occur all the way back to 1960. Very soon we will be able to provide better numbers but be assured, there have easily been over 400 school shootings since Columbine... not even including the shootings from Columbine to Sandy Hook.”

“I will assume the 370,000 number is how many students are enrolled at the schools where shootings have occurred,” he added.

[*Stephen Gutowski*](https://thereload.com/about/), award-winning journalist and founder of The Reload, a publication focused on firearms, commented on The Washington Post database that Biden appeared to cite in his X post.

“The methodology of The Post's report appears sound. It filters out accidental shootings where nobody was injured and incidents that did not happen when schools were in session. So, it avoids some of the pitfalls I've seen in other attempts to quantify the number of school shootings,” Gutowski said.

[*Mark Oliva*](https://www.nssf.org/articles/tag/mark-oliva/), managing director of public affairs at the National Shooting Sports Foundation, though, had a different perspective on The Washington Post's data.

“The Washington Post's methodology also seems to include incidents that were not on school campuses or during school hours as well. They also included incidents where a school resource officer responded with gunfire,” Olivia said.

“Many of the incidents listed were crimes where unknown individuals fired at schools, but it didn't indicate if that was from off-school grounds. These would seem [to] add significantly to their statistics without greater context. Only one incident noted it was gang-related, but it would seem that gang activity and drug-related crimes would be a sizable factor. One incident listed as a school shooting was the notorious Lee Boyd Malvo crimes,” Oliva added.

“I didn't highlight incidents The Washington Post listed as suicides or clearly domestic violence,” he continued.

Likewise, [*Security.org*](https://www.security.org/blog/a-timeline-of-school-shootings-since-columbine/), using data from the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS) [*School Shooting Safety Compendium*](https://www.chds.us/sssc/data-map/) (SSSC) and the [*K-12 School Shooting Database*](https://k12ssdb.org/all-shootings), shows the number of gun incidents involving students in grades K-12 has increased since the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. In 1999 a total of 22 gun incidents occurred on school grounds impacting K-12 students, according to the data.

Six of these incidents involved an active shooter, while the other 16 did not. In 2004, 35 gun incidents occurred on school grounds, with two incidents involving an active shooter, while the other 33 did not, the same data shows. The number of gun incidents impacting K-12 students on school grounds declined to 16 in 2011, with two of those incidents involving an active shooter, while the other 14 did not.

Conversely, the number of gun incidents impacting K-12 students on school grounds increased to 58 in 2017, with six incidents involving an active shooter, while the other 52 did not, according to the same data. Gun incidents on school grounds increased again in the years following, hitting 119 in 2019.

Out of these 119 incidents, seven involved an active shooter, while the other 112 did not. Gun incidents on school grounds impacting K-12 students reached its highest level at 250 in 2021, with nine of these incidents involving an active shooter, while the other 241 did not. The number of gun incidents on school grounds impacting K-12 students slightly decreased but still remained high in 2023 at 198. Out of these 198 incidents, six involved an active shooter, while the other 192 did not, according to the same Security.org piece. [***(RELATED: Fact Checking Biden's Claim About His Uncle's Death)***](https://checkyourfact.com/2024/04/19/fact-check-bidens-claim-uncles-death/)

Breaking down the data into percentage of active shooter incidents by school level, 59% of active shooter incidents have occurred at high schools, while only 21% of these incidents have occurred at middle schools, junior high schools, or 6-12 schools.

Similarly, 14% of active shooter incidents have occurred at elementary schools, 3% of these incidents have occurred at K-12 or K-8 schools, and 3% of these incidents are marked as other or unknown, the same piece indicates. The percentages cover incidents between 1999 and 2022. Both the data and the percentages cited in the piece originally stem from the K-12 School Shooting Database.

Data from the SSSC featured in a [*September 2023 piece*](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/a01/violent-deaths-and-shootings) from the National Center for Education Statistics examined the number of school shootings at public and private elementary and secondary schools. A total of 23 school shootings occurred for the 2000-2001 school year, with 16 resulting in death and 7 resulting in injuries only, the data shows.

A total of 17 school shootings occurred during the 2010-2011 school year, with 7 resulting in death and 10 resulting in injuries only. A total of 78 school shootings occurred during the 2018-2019 school year, with 33 resulting in death and 45 resulting in injuries only. Finally, 188 school shootings occurred during the 2021-2022 school year, with 57 resulting in death and 131 resulting in injuries only.

According to the same piece, the SSSC defines “school shootings” as “incidents in which a gun is brandished, is fired, or a bullet hits school property for any reason, regardless of the number of victims, time of day, or day of week. During the coronavirus pandemic, this definition includes shootings that happen on school property during remote instruction.”

Furthermore, an [*April 20 article*](https://www.newsweek.com/america-record-school-shooting-columbine-1891763) from Newsweek indicates at least 493 people have been “killed with guns on school property” since 1999, with at least 138 of these deaths having been the result of an “active shooter.” This data also originally stems from the K-12 School Shooting Database.

**Graphic**

US President Joe Biden walks to board Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House in Washington, DC, on April 23, 2024, en route to Joint Base Andrews. Biden is travelling to Florida to attend campaign events, and is expected to deliver a speech on abortion. (Photo by Jim WATSON / AFP) (Photo by JIM WATSON/AFP via Getty Images)

**Load-Date:** April 25, 2024

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