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Guns and Teachers: The Way of the Future

Virginia Tech, 2007 - 33 dead, Sandy Hook Elementary School, 2012 - 28 dead, Uvalde Texas, 2022 - 22 dead. These are just some of the countless school shootings that have happened within the United States. This is the result of a broken system. Within the US from 2009 to 2018, there has been 288 school shootings. Being in 2023, that number is undoubtedly nearing or over 500 school shootings. Through these tragedies, there has been one thing in common - slow police response. The police took approximately thirty minutes to respond to the first call at Virginia Tech, four minutes for Sandy Hook, and police didn't enter the school building at Uvalde for an hour. A simple solution to this epidemic is arming teachers as it will brew confidence, provide piece of mind, and provide the teachers of America the resources and skills they need if they ever find themselves and their students in this hellish prospect.

Firstly, there are some obvious drawbacks to arming teachers. One issue that Greene mentions is , "...how would a teacher keep the gun secured?"(Greene, 1). This issue is not simply just which junk drawer can I chuck my gun in, but where can I keep this gun safe in my classroom - full of bright, young students - and at the same time, make sure it doesn't, "... fall into younger hands..."(Greene, 1). Through past school shooting, such as the Oxford High School Shooting, the shooter may plan the shooting in advance while at school. While arming the teachers may be with good intentions, the shooter doesn't, "...have to figure out how to get a gun into the school - there are plenty already there"(Greene, 1). This is one of the main contributing

factors as to why teachers shouldn't be armed. Why would you introduce one of the hardest aspects of causing a shooting into a school and make it readily available for a potential shooter to use? This is backwards thinking! Another aspect that is important is training. An organization called FASTER Saves Lives offers teachers in Ohio to as far as Oklahoma a twenty - six hour course on gunsaftey, school shooting saftey, first aid, and much more. However, by comparison, "...police officers in the state [of Ohio] undergo more than 700 total hours of training... And school resource officers... complete an additional 40 hours..."(Mervosh, 3). The disparity in training for some teachers that are available are - quite frankly - frightening. If police officers require more than ten times the amount of required training than teachers, in what capacity will a teacher's knowledge with a weapon be effective? This doesn't factor in the cost as well. Teachers across the country are underpaid and struggle to get supplied for the classroom - three expenses in the form of a gun, ammunition, and training will only add to the fiscal, mental, and emotional struggle teachers have to go through. Arming teachers has its inherent drawbacks as teachers have to figure out where to put it - where it can be safe and easily access during an emergency , giving the shooter ease of access as plenty of guns at school, and the cost of training as well as the gun itself and ammo.

Arming teachers has been proven to give parents and adults confidence. In recent polls, "... arming school employees is fining appeal - slight majorities among parents and adults..."(Mervosh, 3). Arming teachers has shown statistically to appeal to parents and teachers as it gives them the confidence that the teachers will be able to fight back if there ever is a need to. If they and their students have to go through the misery that is a school shootings. This doesn't come as a surprise as, "2018, the last year for which statistics were available, federal survey data estimated that 2.6 percent of public schools had armed faculty."(Mervosh, 1). This is

alarmingly low as this statistic goes into the gunmans favor. The probability that he will be able to go to school with a gun AND be uncontested for a duration of time - until the police or law enforcement show up - is almaringly high. Maybe this is why school shootings happen so often. Teachers and faculty aren't properly equipped to handle such an event even though the past is often the best teacher. States like Ohio have clearly had enough as, "... ... in the weeks after the Uvalde shooting, lawmakers in Ohio made it easier for teachers and other shcool employees to cary guns." (Mervosh, 2). Contrary to what others beleive, legislation like this is a move in the right direction. This doesn't explicitly state that ALL teachers and non - officer staff have to carry a gun, it is made so that only those who want to, are able to do so easily. In Ohio, legislation has been contentious as it requires no more than twenty four hours of training, along with eight hours of recertification. Although many will compare the school staff and teachers to police officers, supports sugguest that , "24 hours is enough because while police training includes everything from traffic tickets to legal matters, school employees tightly focus on firearm proficiency and active shooter response. "(Mervosh, 2). This is completely fair. Teachers who choose to arm themselves aren't tasked with dealing with the general public but rather just one person - the gunman. Through legislation, teachers who want to be armed are able to - in states such as Ohio - which aids in confidence in adults and parents as the teachers have to go through extensive training and become capable in defending not only themselves, but their students as well.

Arming teachers not only brews confidence in parents but also gives teachers themselves peace of mind. Mandi, a kindergarten teacher in Ohio decided that she needed to do something after the Uvalde shooting. Her, "... school is an older building, with no automatic locks on classroom doors and no police officer on campus."(Mervosh, 1). She described her sittuatoin as

helpless. For Mandi, after a string of mass shootings, the solution seemed simple - if you can't beat them, join them. In this case, fight a person who has a gun with a gun. Getting the proper training is the key step for a teacher to reach peace of mind when deciding to arm themselves.

In 2023, there have been more shootings than ever before - some of them being school shootings. Properly arming teachers is one method to stopping this epidemic of hellish events. Arming teachers has proven to give parents of students the confidence that if something were to ever happen, that their son or daughter would be able to come home that day. Not only does it foster confidence in teachers, but it also give teachers themselves confidence in that they will be able to rise to the occasion and keep their own students safe.