

Right Upheld to Bear Arms

Rifle Organization Explains Its Position on Firearms

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NEW YORK TIMES:

In reply to your Nov. 27 editorial "The Right to Bear Arms" I would like to make clear the position of the National Rifle Association of America with respect to this important guarantee in the United States Constitution.

The National Rifle Association is composed of over 600,000 citizens of the United States who recognize the responsibility attendant to the ownership of firearms. This responsibility is carried out by adherence to its major programs based on safe handling of firearms while engaged in the sport of competitive marksmanship and the hunting or game in accordance with the conservation policies of Federal and state authorities.

This organization is pledged to the active support of all law-enforcement agencies in the preservation of law and order.

Small Arms and Defense

From its charter of 1871 the National Rifle Association forms the base for small arms competence for national defense. The N.R.A. sets the standards for training and proficiency for small arms marksmanship in coordination with the director of civilian marksmanship and the National Board for the Promotion of Rifle Practice headed by the Under Secretary of the Army.

This organization conducts a nationwide campaign for shooting safety in the home and in the field. Forty-three thousand volunteer instructors participate in the hunting safety course certification required by some 34 states before issuance of hunting licenses. The home firearm safety course is conducted by N.R.A. instructors in coordination with the Public Health Service.

This 92-year-old organization abhors the tragedy of the death of our beloved President by the use of a rifle in hands controlled by the twisted brain of an assassin. The National Rifle Association, with the full force of its membership, resolves to extend every effort; provide any guidance available in its vast experience of responsible use of firearms in assisting any government agency

—Federal, state or local—in formulating effective gun legislation. The "right to keep and bear arms" is not obsolete, as has been suggested. Without this "right" and all of its ramifications, this country could be unalterably weakened in its defense posture.

The real joy in abolishing this freedom and registration of guns would be in the camps of enemies of the United States.

Responsibility for Freedoms

One must ask if any potential aggressor draws comfort from the knowledge that 30,000,000 Americans own and know how to use firearms. With this power in our hands, we must individually and collectively strive to attain responsibility in the exercise of the freedoms we have as citizens of this country, which includes the right to keep and bear arms (Article II of the Constitution).

The National Rifle Association is dedicated to this task and seeks support from all good citizens who own guns and cherish their rights to do so.

FRANKLIN L. ORTH,
Executive Vice President, National Rifle Association of America.
Washington, Nov. 29, 1963.

New York Times
December 3, 1963



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.

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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?

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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?

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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

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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

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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.

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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.

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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.

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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.