

National Rifle Association Misfires Again

Written by Admin

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When the National Rifle Association finally revealed what it was willing to do to help curb gun violence in schools, it fired a blank.

“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,” NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre said at a so-called news conference in which he refused to take questions.

As 20 innocent kids, most of them 6-years-old, and six caring adults were being buried last week, the best idea the NRA had to offer was for us to begin arming teachers with guns. That’s the same feeble, ineffective “answer” LaPierre provided five years ago after the Virginia Tech shootings. Instead of making productive suggestions in the aftermath of 26 deaths in Newtown, Conn., LaPierre went on to blame Congress, President Obama, the media, video game manufacturers – everyone but the NRA, which thinks it should be alright for citizens to own an arsenal of automatic weapons.

LaPierre failed to note that many schools already have armed guards on site. Columbine High School, for example, had a two armed policemen stationed in the school in 1999, yet 15 people were killed and 23 injured.

The NRA executive sought to belittle gun-free school safety zones. But Media Matters, the watchdog group, pointed out: “In fact, primary and secondary schools – where firearms are typically prohibited – are much safer environments for young people than the surrounding communities, even taking into account horrific school shootings. Since the Department of

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Justice Bureau of Justice Statistics began recording homicides at schools in the 1992-3 school year, the proportion of youth homicides that occurred at school has never exceeded 2 percent of total youth homicides. Suicide was also much more likely to occur away from school.”

It added, “Even gun advocate Gary Kleck noted in his 1997 book Targeting Guns: Firearms and Their Control that “Both gun carrying and gun violence are thus phenomena almost entirely confined to the world outside schools.”

No political rant would be complete these days without an attack on President Obama. And when LaPierre fired at the White House, he was again off target.

In his remarks, LaPierre said, “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.”

What LaPierre neglected to say was the Secure Our Schools policy grants are not the only source of financing school safety initiatives. In fact, the Department of Education has requested nearly \$200 million for its Successful, Safe and Health Schools program.

The NRA official also took aim at video games, listing some by name: “Bulletstorm,” “Grand Theft Auto,” “Mortal Kombat,” “Splatterhouse” and “Kindergarten Killers.”

But Max Fisher wrote in the Washington Post, “Looking at the world’s 10 largest video game markets yields no evident, statistical correlation between video game consumption and gun-related killings.”

While there is no provable link between acts of violence and video games, states with higher gun ownership rates and weak gun laws have the highest rates of gun deaths, according to the Violence Policy Center.

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It said in one report, “The analysis reveals that the five states with the highest per capita gun death rates were Louisiana, Mississippi, Alaska, Alabama, and Nevada. Each of these states had a per capita gun death rate far exceeding the national per capita gun death rate of 10.34 per 100,000 for 2007. Each of the top-ranking states has lax gun laws and higher gun ownership rates.

“By contrast, states with strong gun laws and low rates of gun ownership had far lower rates of firearm-related death. Ranking last in the nation for gun death was Hawaii, followed by Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New York.”

Josh Sugarmann, executive director of the Violence Policy Center and a native of Newtown, Conn., said the NRA’s plan to arm teachers won’t work.

“The NRA plan, which cynically allows for the continued sale of the assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines marketed by its gun industry corporate donors has already been tried, and it did not work,” Sugarmann said.

He added, “Now is the time to limit the increasingly lethal firepower available to civilians and halt the sale of military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. The American people understand that – even if the NRA and the gun industry that helps fund it do not.”

{jcomments on}