**Gun Control**

1. **2 disagree articles**

①Forget Gun Control. America Needs Fallacy Control.

Enough is enough. It’s epidemic. It’s dangerous. And the time has come to demand its end.

In the aftermath of the horrific massacre in Las Vegas, America needs fallacy control. Yes, we must declare war on fallaciousness. Now more than ever, the nation is suffering from an outbreak of illogical thinking.

In response to senseless violence, clearheaded citizens deserve a safe space from the 24/7 barrage of rhetorical nonsense. Let’s break down the collective cognitive breakdown.

**Argumentum Ad Celebritum**

Empty talking points don’t become persuasive arguments when uttered by Hollywood stars. But in the bizarre land of the celebrity cult, late-night comedian Jimmy Kimmel has been suddenly anointed “America’s conscience” and “voice of reason.”

Kimmel railed “intensely” on TV Monday night against politicians doing “nothing” to stop mass [gun violence](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true). Sobbing and emotional, he insisted, “there’s a lot of things we can do about it.”

Yet, Kimmel acknowledged that Mandalay Bay gunman Stephen Paddock had passed multiple, mandated [background checks](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true) and had no criminal [history](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true).

Moreover, Paddock bought his guns legally from Nevada and Utah gun shops subject to a thicket of local, state, and federal rules—and reportedly carried 23 of his weapons into a casino/hotel that already operates as a gun-free zone.

Federal studies show that a measly 1 to 3 percent of all guns are purchased at gun shows, but that didn’t stop Kimmel from tossing around non sequiturs attacking the “gun show loophole.” It’s a mythical exemption in federal law for private weapons sales at gun shows or online intended to drum up hysteria about unregulated gun sales.

In reality, [firearms](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true) purchased through federally licensed firearms dealers at gun shops, shows, garage sales, or anywhere else are subject to all the usual checks and restrictions.

Only a narrow category of same-state transactions between private individuals not engaged in the commercial business of selling firearms (family members or collectors, for example) are unaffected by those regulations.

There is zero empirical [evidence](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true) that banning these types of transactions would do anything to prevent gun crimes or mass shootings.

But who needs evidence when Jimmy Kimmel is bawling on stage “intensely”? The tears of a clown outweigh the sobriety of facts.

**Argumentum Ad Populum and Argumentum Ad Hashtag**

Actor Billy Baldwin unloaded a fallacy two-fer with his assertion that “the overwhelming majority of Dems, Reps & NRA members endorse #GunSafety,” so “how can we let the #NRA hold us hostage like this? #NRATerrorists.”

Claiming that an “overwhelming majority” of people agree with you doesn’t make your argument sound. Nor does citing polls showing support for “gun show loopholes” that those surveyed don’t fully understand.

Nor does attacking the character of your political opponents and hashtag-smearing them as “NRATerrorists” for holding political viewpoints different than your own.

**Straw Men and Red Herrings**

Grossly oversimplifying support of ineffective or superfluous gun control measures as “#GunSafety” allows celebrities, politicians, and [activists](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true) to prop up their favorite hollow debating tactic: asserting that gun owners, NRA members, and Republicans don’t care about gun safety and want more innocent people to die.

Democrat Rep. Ted Lieu of California illustrated a similar diversionary tactic by waving the red herring of a “gun silencer bill” and demanding that GOP “COWARDS” vote against deregulating such suppressors.

Hillary Clinton also demagogued the issue, ghoulishly tweeting: “Imagine the deaths if the shooter had a silencer, which the NRA wants to make easier to get.”

Her running mate and Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine parroted the [propaganda](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true), claiming that Paddock “was only stopped because he didn’t have a silencer on his firearm, and the sound drew people to the place where he was ultimately stopped.”

Police, however, took 72 minutes to locate Paddock; it was the sound of hotel fire alarms set off by all the gun smoke that led them to the shooter. But let’s not let pesky facts in the way.

**Think of the Children**

Invoking kids to support one’s public policy preferences is not an argument. It’s a timeworn appeal to emotion. Without it, however, gun control advocates are all out of ammunition.

“We as a society owe it to our [children](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Viewpoints&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=1&docId=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&docType=Viewpoint+essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CZUPIIS311205446&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true&authCount=1&u=troy25957&backToSource=true)” to pass “common sense” gun control, New Orleans Saints coach Sean Payton pleaded.

“Thoughts & prayers are NOT enough. Not when more moms & dads will bury kids this week, & more sons & daughters will grow up without parents,” Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., fumed on Twitter.

And actor Boris Kodjoe tweeted: “My 10 year old asked me how the shooter was able to get his machine gun. I told him that pretty much anyone in the US can. ‘But why daddy’?”

Too bad Kodjoe’s kid will never know that daddy didn’t tell him the truth about fully automatic firearms (aka “machine guns”), which have been effectively banned from private civilian ownership in the U.S. as a result of federal gun legislation dating back to 1934.

Nor will the children of the “Think about the children!” brigade be taught the truth about defensive gun use or Second Amendment history and jurisprudence.

We owe our children critical thinking skills and evidence-based public policy, not knee-jerk slogans and tear-jerking treacle.

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Malkin, M. (2018). Forget Gun Control. America Needs Fallacy Control. In *Opposing Viewpoints Online Collection*. Detroit: Gale. (Reprinted from Forget Gun Control. America Needs Fallacy Control., *The Daily Signal*, 2017, October 4) Retrieved from http://link.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/apps/doc/ZUPIIS311205446/OVIC?u=troy25957&sid=OVIC&xid=dbb2b1b1

② The N.R.A.'s Lessons for Gun Control

Is helpless outrage the only choice gun-control advocates have after Las Vegas? As the horrific news unfolded, share prices of major gun manufacturers rose. Market investors were trading on the ugly reality we all knew: Gun regulations would not change, but fear of them would drive sales.

Understanding the choices gun-control advocates have begins with understanding where the outsize power of the National Rifle Association originates.

Most people assume its power comes from money. The truth is that gun-control advocates have lots of money, too. Billionaires like Michael Bloomberg have pledged fortunes to supporting gun control. After mass shootings, support for sensible [gun laws](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=FeaturedContent&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=3&docId=GALE%7CA508069793&docType=Essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CA508069793&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) grows.

The N.R.A.'s power is not just about its money or number of supporters or a favorable political map. It has also built something that gun-control advocates lack: an organized base of grass-roots power.

I grew up in Texas and now live in California. I study grass-roots organizations. I am a gun-control advocate with childhood friends who are ardent gun-rights supporters. I have seen the different ways in which the gun-rights and gun-control movements have built their bases.

First, gun-control groups summon action among people who agree, while gun-rights groups engage people who do not necessarily agree in association with one another. Most people assume that people who join groups like the N.R.A. are people who support gun rights -- but that is not always the case.

Consider the anti-abortion movement. The sociologist Ziad Munson has found that almost half of the activists on the front lines of the anti-abortion movement -- those who protest outside abortion clinics -- were not anti-abortion when they attended their first event. They attended because a friend asked them, they had just joined a new church, or they retired and had more free time. They stayed, however, because at these events, they found things we all want: friends, responsibility, a sense that what they are doing matters. By finding fellowship and responsibility, these people changed not only their views on abortion but also their commitment to act.

Local gun clubs and gun shops provide a similar structure for the gun-rights movement. There are more gun clubs and gun shops in the United States than there are McDonald's. (The proportion of gun clubs affiliated with the N.R.A. is notoriously hard to track.) My friends who support the N.R.A. did not join a club because of politics. They joined because they wanted somewhere to shoot their guns.

The base of the gun-control movement is defined not by clubs but by ideology: people who come to the movement and share a view on gun control and can be sent into action. The organizations then add up those actions to claim a base. We take it for granted that gun-control groups have to define their base by moral outrage. The truth is, it's a choice that movement leaders make. They can decide to work through structures or not.

Second, gun-control groups focus on persuasion, while gun-rights groups focus on identity. In many ways, my friends and I who disagree on guns are similar. But their views evolved after joining these gun groups. So did their identities. The gun-rights groups were not just persuading them to support gun rights; they were also helping my friends rearticulate their own lives in terms of a broader vision of the future. They were no longer just hunters. They were protectors of a way of life. That is why the N.R.A.'s version of gun rights is so intimately tied to questions of race and identity.

When I joined gun-control groups, I got messages about narrowly defined issues like [background checks](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=FeaturedContent&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=3&docId=GALE%7CA508069793&docType=Essay&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CA508069793&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) and safety locks. These messages were a pollster's dream, tested down to the comma to maximize the likelihood that I would donate or take action. But they never challenged me to rethink who I was or what my relationship to my community was.

Third, for gun-rights groups, the work of engaging with identity and getting people to associate rests on a choice leaders made to invest in building the capacity of ordinary people to participate -- and lead -- in politics. When I studied groups that were most effective at building a grass-roots base, I found that the key factor to success was the nature of the relationships they created. The most effective groups used relationships as a vehicle for bringing people off the sidelines of public life and teaching them to speak truth to power. You can't convince someone to rethink who they are or what responsibility they want to take for their community through a mailer.

I have two young children. After Sandy Hook, I joined several gun-control organizations in a desperate effort to do something. These organizations asked me for money and sent me links for places to send emails or make phone calls. But none introduced me to anyone else in the organization or invited me to strategize about what I could do. Instead, I felt like a prop in a game under their control. I eventually asked to be taken off their lists.

Many groups, like Everytown for Gun Safety, are doing vital work to build a movement in the face of the entrenched power of the N.R.A. Reform will take more than raising money or shifting public opinion. The currency that matters in grass-roots power is commitment.

Elected officials can recognize the difference between organizations that can activate only people who are in agreement and those that can transform people who are not. The N.R.A. got over 80,000 people from all over the country to attend its annual meeting in 2017. What gun-control organization can claim the same?

Building a movement will require organizations to invest in the leadership of ordinary people by equipping them with the motivations, skills and autonomy they need to act. Most organizations never give people that opportunity.

Since the 2016 election, we have seen people engaged and hungry for the opportunity to take meaningful action. The question is, will one of the deadliest shootings of Americans in United States history prompt gun-control leaders to give people that chance?

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Han, H. (2017, October 5). The N.R.A.'s Lessons for Gun Control. *New York Times*, p. A23(L). Retrieved from http://link.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/apps/doc/A508069793/OVIC?u=troy25957&sid=OVIC&xid=3c69409d

1. **2 argee article**

**①**Fla. school shooting is not the tipping point

Byline: Jon Cowan and Jim Kessler

In a rational world, Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, with its 17 dead and its heroic [students](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=FeaturedContent&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CA528528468&docType=Article&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CA528528468&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true) marching on Tallahassee and calling out legislators on national television, would be the tipping point for America to finally pass new gun laws. But we have to jettison the idea that the next gun horror will tip the scales toward action and instead bridge the divide at the heart of America's split on guns -- the divide between those who see guns primarily as a threat to their safety and those who see guns as a form of self-protection.

There is no official count of gun ownership in the United States, but experts estimate at least 300 million guns in private hands. Pew Research found that 42% of Americans had a gun in their home. In rural areas, gun ownership approaches 60% of households, while in urban areas it's half that. The No. 1 reason owners possess firearms is self-protection.

Then there is gun [crime](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=FeaturedContent&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CA528528468&docType=Article&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CA528528468&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true). About 400,000 gun crimes are committed every year, with 130,000 people being shot and 11,000 becoming victims of gun homicides. Every 12 hours, roughly the same number of people die in near anonymity in gun crimes as were killed this week in Parkland, Fla.

If you push these facts together, there are two ways to interpret them. The first is, "My God, that's a lot of gun carnage." The second is, "Hmmm, 299,600,000 guns didn't cause anyone any harm." Which view you hold depends upon where you live. Baltimore, encompassing 92 square miles, suffered through 318 homicides in 2016. The combined [murder](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=FeaturedContent&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CA528528468&docType=Article&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CA528528468&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true) total of eight rural Western states spread out over 1,302,361 square miles was 320.

This matters because we are a sparse, rural country, so gun safety advocates are outnumbered in Congress. These Western rural states, combined with the South (which has the highest gun ownership rate of any region), have enough Senate votes to scuttle any gun law. That is why the path to stricter gun laws is to find the balance point between what rural and suburban gun owners seek from guns for protection and what mostly urban dwellers fear from guns to protect theirs.

In most of the country, gun laws are already minimally strict, so owners desire less in the form of looser laws and more in terms of respect for the individual right to own firearms, for the responsible manner in which most stores handle them, and for the view held by most of them that firearms make them feel safe. Urban areas need stiffer laws to interdict the 400,000 guns that find their way into crime each year, but should be content to leave alone the bulk of the other 300 million in law-abiding private hands.

We could start with stricter laws to deal with gun trafficking between states, improving the criminal background check system to thwart illegal would-be buyers and the mentally ill from obtaining guns, requiring the same criminal [background checks](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=FeaturedContent&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CA528528468&docType=Article&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CA528528468&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true) for all firearms sales from gun shows and the Internet as already required at gun stores, and reducing the lethality of certain firearms such as semiautomatic rifles, bump stocks and the large-capacity magazines they use.

These laws, drafted by weighing the equities held by gun owners and non-gun owners in rural, urban and suburban areas, could be broadly popular. If that seems like a pipe dream, that's how the Brady Law ultimately passed in 1993 -- giving gun control advocates the background check they needed but making it instant, which is what gun buyers wanted.

Together, we have spent 50 years fighting for better gun laws working for politicians such as Sen. Chuck Schumer and New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, and starting up our own gun safety organization. What becomes apparent on guns is that we are a big country with a constitutional right to own guns, massive gun ownership and a crime problem unlike any other in the world.

Instead of praying the next massacre will shake America to its senses, we must engage the millions who believe possession of firearms is not only their right but also their duty to protect the safety of their families.

Jon Cowan is president and Jim Kessler is senior vice president for policy at Third Way.

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Cowan, J., & Kessler, J. (2018, February 21). Fla. school shooting is not the tipping point. *USA Today*, p. 07A. Retrieved from http://link.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/apps/doc/A528528468/OVIC?u=troy25957&sid=OVIC&xid=74c34196

**②**School Violence

[School violence](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) threatens the safety of [students](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true), [teachers](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true), and staff while also disrupting the overall learning environment. Mass shootings on school campuses have become increasingly prevalent in the [United States](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) since the late 1990s. Though school shootings attract significant media attention and can result in the loss of many lives, other types of [violence](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) are much more common and can have damaging consequences in [schools](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) and their communities. More recurrent types of school violence include [bullying](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true), [cyberbullying](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true), fighting, gender-based violence, and [gang violence](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true). According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than one-fifth of [high school students](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) were involved in a physical fight in 2015.

Research indicates that students perform better academically when they feel safe in their learning environment. Educators, policy makers, and other concerned citizens have sought ways to improve [school safety](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) and prevent both incidents of mass violence as well as more commonplace situations that place students, teachers, and staff at risk. No single policy or approach can adequately address all of the multiple factors that contribute to school violence, so communities must choose where to devote their resources to make the greatest impact. While overwhelming consensus agrees that students have a right to learn without fear of violence, public debate has focused on how to achieve safer schools without creating burdens that would interfere with the students’ education or infringe too harshly upon personal freedoms.

On April 20, 1999, two students killed twelve of their fellow students and a teacher and injured twenty-three others at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, before killing themselves. The two students primarily used [firearms](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) to attack their victims but also brought several knives and several types of bombs. Had the explosives detonated as the perpetrators had intended, the loss of life would have been much greater. Though incidents of mass violence had occurred previously in the United States, including deadly shootings at a high school in Oregon and a middle school in Arkansas one year earlier, the Columbine massacre surprised many Americans, who struggled to understand what might have caused such devastation. A Pew Research study determined the Columbine massacre to be the most-followed news story of 1999. Parents, elected officials, and the media looked for factors that may have contributed to these students’ actions. Violent video games, hard rock music, Hollywood films, and the Internet all received scrutiny for possibly inspiring the attack.

As school shootings have continued with heartbreaking regularity since the Columbine massacre, the root causes of these mass violence events still need to be identified and addressed. Since the events at Columbine, [gun violence](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) has struck every level of the American education experience, including a 2007 attack at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University that resulted in thirty-two deaths, and a 2012 attack at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, that resulted in twenty-seven deaths, mostly of [children](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true)between the ages of six and seven. The Columbine massacre remained the deadliest high school shooting until the 2018 Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland, Florida, in which a former student killed seventeen people and wounded seventeen others.

**Proposals to Improve School Safety**

Though the urgency to increase school safety is often framed within the context of school shootings, the most effective solutions address the conditions that make all types of violence easier to prevent. While the number of mass violence events at schools has increased, school violence overall has declined. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, students ages 12–18 suffered approximately 841,000 incidents of theft and nonfatal violence while at school and an additional 545,100 such incidents off campus in 2015, indicating that about 3.3 percent of students experience such an incident at school and an additional 2.1 percent experience an incident off campus. This report indicates a significant drop in the incidence rate since 1992, when 18.1 percent of students experienced an on-campus incident, and 17.3 percent reported an off-campus incident. An increased [law enforcement](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) presence has been credited with reducing school violence. This increased presence, however, has also contributed to more students becoming involved in the criminal justice system at an early age, a phenomenon that negatively impacts a student’s lifelong achievement and disproportionately affects students of color.

One effective approach to improving school safety requires educators to consider how the school’s layout impacts behavior. [Crime Prevention](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) through Environmental Design (CPTED) encourages schools to intentionally organize the school’s physical space to promote accountability, cooperation, and visibility. School resource officers can patrol campuses more effectively by using chain link fences around the school’s perimeter instead of a solid wall. Similarly, well-maintained landscapes can increase visibility by ensuring trees and other vegetation do not create blind spots on campus. Restricting access to unmonitored areas and keeping rooms locked when not in use are other ways to reduce opportunities for violence. Making sure that all areas of campus remain well lit can discourage misconduct and help students and staff feel safer.

CPTED also involves the implementation of policies and procedures that enable school administrators and resource officers to monitor student and staff behavior as well as campus visitors. Security experts recommend that schools reduce the number of entrances to the school and implement a visitor management program to help schools remain aware of who is on campus. CPTED experts note that violence and other misconduct are more likely to occur in areas where students and staff are unsure of who is responsible for administering the space, such as common spaces. For this reason, establishing clear territorial control is a fundamental component of CPTED. To ensure CPTED’s ongoing effectiveness, school administrators must regularly reassess the effect of campus design to optimize campus security. Schools can also deter violence by ensuring student access to mental health services, providing conflict resolution programs, and fostering an environment where students and staff feel supported.

The security benefits of environmental design can be augmented through technology. Electronic key cards, video surveillance, metal detectors, panic buttons, and other innovations have increasingly been adopted by schools. Outfitting schools with such technologies creates visible evidence that the school has invested in student safety. However, security experts have questioned the feasibility of introducing systems that are expensive to purchase and maintain. For metal detectors to be effective, for example, the devices must be in constant use, requiring the electricity to power them, the staff to operate them, and the necessary maintenance to keep them operational. Requiring students and staff to go through a metal detector every time they enter a school building also requires the sacrifice of time that could be used more productively. Physical obstacles, including metal detectors, and a limited number of entrances and exits could also hinder students and staff from being able to quickly leave during a fire or other emergency.

Companies that manufacture school security technologies have been criticized for taking advantage of the desire of schools to protect their students. In the wake of school shootings and other tragedies, school administrators report being inundated with requests from private firms to showcase their products in the hopes of securing a contract with the school or entire district. Some products, such as armored doors, may be effective but have proven too cost prohibitive for schools. Several companies have successfully marketed bulletproof school materials, such as backpacks, white boards, and blankets, to schools and parents. Security experts, however, have questioned the efficacy of these products.

**Responding to School Shootings**

Schools develop protocols in preparation for mass violence events. In the situation of an active shooter on campus, schools typically are placed under lockdown, in which all doors are locked and no one other than law enforcement is allowed to enter. School and law enforcement officials inform parents and local media about the situation. Placing a school under lockdown can prevent disorder and aid law enforcement in apprehending the intruder. However, the lockdown model has been criticized because it encourages students and staff to stay in the same place and wait for help to arrive. Alternatively, some security experts recommend that students and staff find safe ways to evacuate, especially if an active shooter can access their location.

In the twenty-first century, people around the country have increasingly used social media to express their sympathies to communities affected by school shootings. One of the most common responses has been to offer thoughts and prayers to the victims of violence and their families. [Gun control](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) advocates have criticized this response because, despite its popularity, such sentiments have had no discernible effect in reducing the number of school shootings or making these attacks less deadly. Instead, these critics contend, legislation should be passed to make it more difficult for potential school shooters to acquire guns. Proposed actions include imposing higher age limits, restricting the sale of certain weapons and ammunition, and improving the system of [background checks](http://go.galegroup.com.libproxy.troy.edu/ps/retrieve.do?tabID=Reference&resultListType=RESULT_LIST&searchResultsType=SingleTab&searchType=TopicSearchForm&currentPosition=2&docId=GALE%7CPC3010999234&docType=Topic+overview&sort=Relevance&contentSegment=&prodId=OVIC&contentSet=GALE%7CPC3010999234&topicId=00000000LVWY&searchId=&userGroupName=troy25957&inPS=true&backToSource=true) for gun purchases. Gun rights advocates are critical of calls for gun reform that are made in the aftermath of school shootings; they say that such protests amount to politicizing the tragedy and contend that expressions of sympathy are a more appropriate response. Some gun rights advocates, including President Donald Trump, have recommended providing more armed security personnel as well as arming and training teachers to respond to an active shooter. Opponents of such proposals contend that bringing more firearms into a school setting would increase the likelihood of an incident, including accidental firings and suicides.

Perhaps the most unsettling response to school shootings has been among students who choose to emulate the killer’s actions. Psychologists have suggested that mass shootings can have a contagion effect, inspiring others to commit similar crimes. The media has faced repeated criticism for glorifying the perpetrators of these crimes, feeding into their desire for fame and notoriety. As school shootings become more prevalent, psychologists worry that students will increasingly view mass violence as a normal behavior and a rational response to dissatisfaction with school life.

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