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The Cost of Arming Schools: The Price of Stopping a Bad Guy with a Gun

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THE COST OF ARMING SCHOOLS:
The Price of Stopping a Bad Guy with a Gun

***The Cost of Arming Schools**: The Price of Stopping a Bad Guy with a Gun* is one of three papers written by Edward (Ned) Hill on public policy questions related to gun ownership in the United States.

***Adding up the "Butcher's Bill"**: The Public Health Consequences of the System of Gun Regulation in the United States* examines trends in firearm's related deaths, murders and injuries over time.

How Many Guns are in the United States? estimates the number of firearms available to the civilian population in the United States and the characteristics of the market for semiautomatic firearms.

***The Cost of Arming Schools:** The Price of Stopping a Bad Guy with a Gun* estimates the cost of placing armed security officers in America's schools and examines the state of school security.

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THE COST OF ARMING SCHOOLS:
The Price of Stopping a Bad Guy with a Gun

By Edward W. (Ned) Hill, Ph.D.[1]

The price of implementing the NRA's proposal to place an armed security guard in every school building in the nation is nearly $13 billion a year. The opportunity cost to taxpayers for fully protected schools can reach $23 billion. The cost per student approaches $500 and would take up half of federal spending on elementary and secondary education if paid for by the federal government. Is this the cost of protecting schools? Or, is it just one cost for permitting unlimited access to semi-automatic weapons and large capacity ammunition clips and preventing the potential for mass murder in our schools?

The National Rifle Association's Wayne LaPierre proposed that the federal government place an armed adult in every school in the United States in response to the murders of 20 children and the six American heroes who tried to protect them in Newtown Connecticut's Sandy Hook Elementary School. LaPierre's statement at the press conference used to present the NRA's National School Shield is now infamous: "The *only* thing that stops a *bad* guy with a gun is a *good* guy with a gun."[2]

The NRA may be more interested in diverting public attention from debating controls on semi-automatic weapons and high-capacity ammunition clips with this proposal than it is in promoting school safety. Nevertheless, the NRA's proposed National School Shield has to be taken seriously. But the proposal itself is incomplete. Answers to four questions are needed: Should the guards be trained employees of school systems? How much could the Shield cost? Where is the money to pay for it? And most importantly, will it end the wave of mass murders that the country is enduring? This research note attempts to answer these questions.

Should the guards be trained specialists in school policing?

The transcript of the remarks of LaPierre and of Former Congressman Asa Hutchison, who is the point person for the NRA on the National School Shield, offers confusing guidance on exactly what is being proposed. LaPierre appears to be lobbying for federally funded armed security guards to be placed in each school, while Hutchison paints a picture of armed volunteer adults who have been trained by the NRA patrolling schoolyards.[3]

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[2] From the transcript [***Transcript***] of the NRA's Press Conference with Wayne LaPierre and Asa Hutchison on December 21, 2013 at http://home.nra.org/pdf/Transcript_PDF.pdf

[3] LaPierre, page 7 ***Transcript*** [see note above]: "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." … Hutchison followed LaPierre

Armed volunteers patrolling school buildings and schoolyards are not the current best practice in school security. Trained school security staff members are part law enforcement officer, part counselor, and part teacher and, above all else, they are part of the school's teaching team. They are not-well meaning, quasi-trained retirees. Also school security is not limited to reacting to armed invasions.

Specially trained and armed school law enforcement officers are termed School Resource Officers (SRO) by the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) to differentiate them from traditional police officers as well as from hall monitors or other school staff members who provide out-of-classroom student supervision. NASRO advocates for placing police officers trained to be a combination of teacher, counselor, and law enforcement officer in school buildings.[4] However, school security is not based solely on the presence of armed law enforcement officers in a building. Distinctions should be made between three levels of a school-based security staff: armed and trained school-based law enforcement and security officers (SROs), trained unarmed security guards or School Resource Guards (SRGs), and hall monitors. The last group is in place to maintain order in the school by being adult eyes in hallways; they are not a security or police presence.

Mo Canady, the Executive Director of NASRO, put the full annual cost of a school-based police officer at between $50,000 to $80,000 a year in just salary costs. This by itself puts the price of placing a trained officer in every school building at between $7 and $11 billion a year.[5] I estimate that the cost of putting an armed officer in each public and private school building at between $9.9 billion and $12.8 billion, with the most likely cost being at the high end of the range.

Estimating the cost of placing an armed security officer in every school

A cost estimate cannot be provided for the NRA's National School Shield proposal. As it stands, the National School Shield is not a fully formed proposal. LaPierre appears to be asking for a federal program to place an armed guard of some sort in every school. Hutchison, apparently reacting to the cost of armed professionals, proposes a half-baked volunteer program that is far from accepted school security practice. In a late February piece in *USA Today* there are hints of a hybrid program with expectation that local districts will pick up the cost. The proposal is a moving target. Moving the Shield from concept to program requires some assumptions to be made about its program structure so that it can be analyzed.

I estimate the cost of placing an armed School Resource Officer (SRO) in each school in the United States. A second cost estimate is prepared for providing armed security in school buildings that accounts for the number of SROs and SRGs that would have to be hired to place at least one armed officer in each school building and then adding security resources to account for the size of the student population in different schools. While this second estimate does not directly respond to the NRA's plan, it is closer to that plan's stated purpose of providing comprehensive school security that can deal with a forced armed entry.

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and said (***Transcript***, pages 11-12): "Armed, trained, qualified school security personnel will be one element of that plan, but by no means the only element. …. The second point I want to make is that this will be a program that doesn't depend on massive funding from local authorities or the federal government. Instead, it'll make use of local volunteers serving in their own communities. … In my home state of Arkansas, my son was a volunteer with a local group called "Watchdog Dads," who volunteer their time at schools to patrol playgrounds and provide a measure of added security. Whether they're retired police, retired military or rescue personnel, I think there are people in every community in this country, who would be happy to serve, if only someone asked them and gave them the training and certification to do so."

[4] National Association of School Resource Officers http://www.nasro.org

[5] Full cost includes salary, benefits, equipment and annual training. Source of the quote: Marshall-Genzer. *Marketplace*, 2012 and Jackie Kuchinch, *USA Today*, February 22, 2013.

Cost of a School Resource Officer (SRO) and School Resource Guard (SRG)
Salaries of SROs and SRGs are not available through public data sources, so the median annual earnings of a number of different types of security guards and of a police officer were collected as a way of estimating their cost (Table 1). SRGs will earn a lower salary than SROs.

Lesser skilled School Resource Guards should be certified in first aid and receive specialized training for working in a school, be integrated into the teaching team, but not be armed. The annual cost of a SRG should fall between that of a security guard and an armed security guard. Their salary costs are estimated at $30,000 a year, with benefits at 50 percent of salary, $5,000 a year in training and equipment costs, and 20 percent of full employment cost for overhead and supervision. This results in annual cost of $50,000 a year per SRG.

A lesser skilled School Resource Officer most closely matches the skills of what Salary.com terms a senior security guard. They would have to be licensed to carry a weapon as well as have first aid training and be able to be trained in school security and law. A more skilled SRO will be similar in skills and training as an entry-level police officer. The median salary for a senior security guard is $36,000 with full employment cost of $54,500. Adding annual training and equipment costs of $10,000 and 20 percent overhead charge on the full employment cost for supervision and administration yields an annual cost of $75,400. If the salary increases to $50,000 a year, which approaches the median salary for a police officer, then the estimated cost rises to $97,000 a year. If anything, $97,000 is most likely too low due to the start-up cost of equipping and training the officer. In the Greater Cleveland area, suburban schools budget $100,000 for an SRO, but the cost of a car and mileage is frequently involved because, under current practice, suburban officers cover multiple schools. In developing the cost estimate, $75,000 and $97,000 were used as the most likely range of the annual cost of employing an armed SRO.

It is reasonable to ask if there is enough work to employ school security staff full time. Are there 2,000 hours of work a year for a school guard?[6] Most states require that schools be in session between 180 days a year (36 full work weeks) and 186 days a year. While students need to be in the building for a typical six- or seven-hour day of classroom instruction, employees need to be in place before and after students for an eight-hour workday. This totals 1,400 hours per school year. Security training taken during times when school is not in session yields another 40 to 80 hours of work. Guards can easily work 2,000 hours in a school year if after-school and weekend extracurricular activities and summer sessions are included.

Table 1: Median Wages and Full Cost of Security Guards and Entry-level Police Officers

	Median Salary		Full Cost	
Occupation	Annual	Hourly Wage*	Salary & Benefits**	Non-salary cost As a Percent of Salary
Crossing guard	$23,625	$11.81	$37,422	58.4%
Security guard, casino	$24,874	$12.44	$39,746	59.8%
Security guard	$28,870	$14.44	$44,601	54.5%
Security guard, senior	$36,128	$18.06	$54,467	50.8%
Police patrol officer	$50,454	$25.23	$72,530	43.8%

[6] 2,000 hours is a typical 50-week work year with 40 hours of paid work a week and a paid 2-week vacation.

* Annual salary divided by 2000 work hours a year
* *Employer's full cost: Salary, Social Security, 401K/403B, Disability Insurance, Healthcare, Pension, Time Off
Source: Salary.com, January 1, 2013

If school districts move from the outdated agrarian school calendar, a nine-month school year with an overly long summer break, to a more educationally effective calendar of four 10-week academic sessions followed by three-week vacations, getting to a 2,000 hour work year for guards is easily achievable because it becomes easier to use school buildings for activities during the shorter break periods than during the traditional summer vacation.[7]

Estimated cost of placing an armed SRO in each school building

There were 132,183 schools operating in the 2009-2010 school year in the United States, and the NRA proposes to drape its shield over them by placing an armed guard in each. Three-quarters (98,817) of the schools are part of public school districts, and another 33,366 are private schools.[8] Paying for one armed security guard, or School Resource Officer, in each will cost between $9.9 billion and $12.8 billion, depending on the annual salary of the SRO. The cost for public schools would be between $7.4 billion and $9.6 billion. Paying for an armed SRO in each private school is an added cost that ranges between $2.5 billion and $3.2 billion.

Does current law prevent the public from paying for security in private schools? This is an open question. However, just as public school systems transport private school students and as other public services are provided to private schools, such as ambulance and fire services, a way could be found so that public safety offices could assign guards to work in private school buildings.

Table 2: Estimated Cost of Placing an Armed Uniform Officer in Each School Building

	School Buildings		
	All Schools	Public	Private
Number	132,183	98,817	33,366
Cost of a School Resource Officer (salary and benefits)			
@ $75,000	**$9.9 billion**	$7.4 billion	$2.5 billion
@ $97,000	**$12.8 billion**	$9.9 billion	$3.2 billion

There is a significant problem with the simplistic one-guard-per-school-proposal: it does not take into account the different numbers of students who are in each building. The estimate that follows does take the size of the student population into account.

Estimated security cost based on differential security staffing related to student populations

In this section a more realistic estimate is made of the fiscal impact of securing school buildings from armed invasion and maintaining internal policing and behavior controls. An armed SRO is

[7] One non-agrarian calendar divides the year into 37 weeks of school and 15 weeks of vacation, keeping the total number of school days at 185. The sessions would alternate between 7 and 8 weeks in length interspersed with 3-week vacations. However, lengthening the school year to 40 weeks of instruction (200 days) interspersed with four 3-week vacations is preferable. This calendar results in four 10-week sessions, or 13-week session-break modules with vacation periods taking place in December, April, and August, roughly preserving traditional holiday periods but shortening the long summer break. The advantage of these calendars is that it reduces the amount of lost learning that students experience during the long breaks. This is particularly important for students who live in low-income households. See: Cooper, Harris, et al. (1996); Downey, Douglas B., et al. (2004); and Fitzpatrick, Maria D., et al. (2011).

[8] Calculated from National Center for Educational Statistics, *Digest of Educational Statistics*, "Table 91. Number of public school districts and public and private elementary and secondary schools: Selected years, 1869-70 through 2010-11" Data were adjusted to remove double counting of schools with both elementary and secondary grades and included public schools that did not report grades levels and one-teacher schools as elementary schools.

assumed to be at each school building and then the security staff is supplemented based on the size of the school's student population. Information was taken from a survey conducted by the Council of Great City Schools to establish the staffing ratios, however, they were then adjusted to conform to operating economies that may exist in larger school buildings. The cost model assumes:

- 1 SRO is assigned to each building with 1,000 students or less,
- 2 SROs are assigned to buildings with more than 1,000 students,
- Unarmed, but trained, school Security Resource Guards (SRGs) are assigned to all schools with more than 300 students using a ratio of 1 for every 500 students.

The estimates are derived for both public and private schools. The cost estimates for armed SROs that were used earlier are used here: $75,000 and $97,000. The total cost of unarmed, but trained SRGs is estimated at $50,000 a year, reflecting lower skill requirements and lower amounts of required training. The cost estimates and other data used are presented in Table 3.[9]

Putting in place a full school security package, with an armed School Resource Officer in every school and a complement of SRGs and SROs scaled to the student population of a school would result in the hiring of 156,400 officers and 148,500 guards at a total cost that ranges between $19.1 billion and $22.6 billion a year. Seventy percent of the expenditure will be made for public schools and 30 percent for private schools.

This estimate does not include the capital cost of securing a school—panic buttons, door locks and damage resistant glass for classrooms, cameras and recording equipment, and security for exterior doors.

Table 3: Number of School Resource Officers and School Resource Guards and their Estimated Annual Cost when Adjusting Requirements for the Size of the School

	School Buildings		
	All Schools	Public	Private
Number of Schools	132,183	98,817	33,366
Number of School Resource Officers	156,406	113,651	42,756
Number of School Resource Guards	148,524	98,355	50,169
School Resource Officer Cost			
@ $75,000 each	$11.7 billion	$8.5 billion	$3.2 billion
@ $97,000 each	$15.2 billion	$11.0 billion	$4.1 billion
School Resource Guard Cost @$50,000 each	$7.4 billion	$4.9 billion	$2.5 billion
Total Estimated Cost			
School Resource Officer @ $75,000	**$19.2 billion**	$13.4 billion	$5.7 billion
School Resource Officer @ $97,000	**$22.6 billion**	$15.9 billion	$6.7 billion

[9] The tables in the appendix (Tables A-1 to A-3) show how the cost estimates were developed with the estimated costs for public and private schools broken out by the size of the school. Table A-1 contains the size distribution of school buildings in the nation; Table A-2 has the estimates of the numbers of SROs that need to be hired, distributed by the size of the school and Table A-3 contains estimates of the number of SRGs.

Table 4 lists the costs of the two approaches to securing elementary and secondary schools in the United States. Taking the simplified approach of LaPierre's version of the National School Shield—placing an armed School Resource Officer in each of the 132,000 public and private school buildings in the nation--results in an annual fiscal commitment of $12.8 billion. If the program is designed so that the federal government pays for a security plan that is scaled to respond to the student populations in each of America's schools using a mix of SROs and SRGs, the price balloons to nearly $23 billion.

To put these expenses in perspective, in the fall of 2011 there were 54.7 million students enrolled in public and private elementary and secondary schools. And, the sum of public school revenue and private school tuition payments was $685.8 billion. While these proposed security measures would cost between $181 and $413 per student, the cost is between 1.4% and 3.3% of total elementary and secondary school revenues from all sources: federal, state, and local government, and private tuition payments.

While spending less than $500 a year per student on school security may look modest, the entire budget authorization for federal spending on elementary, secondary, and vocational education in Fiscal Year 2011 was $39.9 billion.[10] If the federal government diverts its current spending on elementary, secondary, and vocational education to pay for an armed SRO in each school, between one-quarter and one-third of current federal spending would go to just pay for the SROs. If the full security package were given preference in current Federal spending, then it would account for more than half of the current appropriation.

Table 4: Comparison of Costs and Impacts of the Two Security Approaches

	Placing One School Resource Officer (SRO) in Each School Building		SROs and SRGs Considering the Student Population in School Buildings	
	Low: SRO @ $75,000	High: SRO @ $97,000	Low: SRO @ $75,000	High: SRO @ $97,000
Estimated Cost	**$9.9 billion**	**$12.8 billion**	**$19.2 billion**	**$22.6 billion**
Number of School Resource Officers (SRO)	132,183	132,183	156,000	156,000
Number of School Resource Guards (SRG)	0	0	149,000	149,000
Cost Per Student (54.7 million students)	$181	$234	$350	$413
Percent of public and private school revenue	1.4%	1.9%	2.8%	3.3%
Share of Federal Spending Authority: 2011*	24.9%	32.1%	48.0%	56.7%

* For elementary, secondary, and vocational schools in 2011

There are three ways to deal with the challenge of securing schools against armed invasion: (1) spend $ 13 billion to put an armed lawman in every school in America, (2) spend $23 billion and fund meaningful school security, or (3) find an alternative way to fend off mass killings.

If the decision is made to go forward with enhanced federally funded school security as an annual expenditure, several questions need to be answered: (1) Should private schools be covered as well as public schools? Saying yes will increase the cost by 30 percent. But if policy makers believe that there is a credible sustained threat of armed invasions of schools, why should one

[10] Office of Management and Budget, Budget of the United States Government, 2013 (*The Budget*,) Historical Tables, Table 5.1 "Budget Authority by Function and Subfunction: 1976-2017." http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/Historicals

group of schools be secured and another not? (2) Should a program of enhanced security be structured as an unfunded mandate from the federal government? After all, the direct benefits from protecting children are purely local. However, this will also either increase local taxes to pay for the mandated service or it will lead to money being diverted from direct educational services. (3) Will placing a single armed security guard in every school in the nation deter armed invasions and gun death in schools?

The NRA is trying to turn what should be a public policy debate about semi-automatic weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines into a debate about armed security in schools. Paying strict attention to the NRA's proposal narrows the debate to finding ways to prevent armed invaders of school buildings. The proposal deflects attention from two important questions: Are schools adequately protected from all threats—not just armed invasions? How do we, as a nation, deter mass killings?

Despite the NRA's rhetorical artifice, the reality is that some school districts are spending large amounts of money on police security that could be spent elsewhere if federal funds for security are made available, such as on enhancing student academic performance. Alternatively, if a large new federal spending program is created, or if a set of unfunded mandates related to school security are legislated, what current educational activities will be put in danger?

IS THE NRA'S POLICY PROPOSAL THE RIGHT APPROACH?

The current state of school security

It turns out that most of America's public school students between the ages of 12 and 18 are in schools where some security is already in place: 91 percent are in schools where either adult school staff or other adults supervise the hallways, 70 percent are in buildings with at least one security camera, 64 percent are in buildings with locked entrance and exit doors, and 68 percent are in buildings with security officers or assigned police officers.[11]

Because of the age range covered in these data, children enrolled in elementary schools, such as Sandy Hook, are not represented. (Typically a 12 year old is in 7th grade.) The data do establish the fact that most middle and secondary schools have some security in place. But we do not know if it is enough to fend off an indiscriminate armed invasion.

Another way to learn about the state of school security is to examine the benchmarking report of the Council of Great City Schools.[12] The Council represents 67 of the nation's large public school districts. To be eligible for membership a district has to either enroll more than 35,000 students or be in a school district with more than 250,000 residents. The members of the Council enroll 6.9 million students in 11,684 school buildings, accounting for 14 percent of the nation's public school students.

The 42 school districts that reported take security seriously. The median district spends 0.94 percent of general fund revenues on either their own security staff or on contracted law

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[11] National Center for Educational Statistics, *Indicators of School Crimes and Safety: 2011*, Table 21.1: "Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported selected security measures at school: Various years, 1999–2009." From: U.S. Department of Justice, School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey."
http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/crimeindicators2011/tables/table_21_1.asp

[12] Sixty-one of the 67 members of the Council for Great City Schools contribute data to the benchmarking project. The report does not identify the districts. Data on security are displayed on pages 116 to 127. Forty-two member districts reported on school security. See: *Managing for Results in America's Great City Schools: 2012* (Council for Great City Schools.

enforcement officers. Despite this expenditure the modeling done earlier indicates that this percentage may be less than ideal to provide comprehensive school security and most likely represents a tradeoff between locally-funded school security and spending on educational services.

To be effective, school security staff members require specialized training. Thirty districts report on training for school-based law enforcement officers (SROs). The median number of training hours per year is 40, which is provided by one-third of the districts. Three districts provide more than 80 hours of training, and another 11 between 41 and 80 hours. In sum, 24 of the 30 member districts that reported provide between one and two full workweeks of specialized training per year for their SROs.

The median number of hours of training received by school security guards in the 42 reporting districts was 30 hours per year. There was a much wider range of training provided to these security staff members than for SROs, ranging from a low of one hour per year to a high of 96 hours. Nine districts provided more than 40 hours of training, eight provided 40, and seven provided either 30 or 32 hours. Security guards in another seven districts trained between 20 and 24 hours, six districts provided either 12 or 16 hours of training, and eight trained for less than nine hours. This wide variation in training most likely reflects lumping SRGs together with hall monitors and unspecialized security guards into the reporting category.

The districts represented by the Council of Great City Schools had a median number of 1.1 uniformed armed and unarmed security guards and law enforcement officers per 1,000 students, with a high of 7.9 and a low of 0.9. Thirteen of the 42 districts (31 percent) had between one and two officers per 1,000 students and six had more than two. It is likely that these ratios provide a distorted picture of the placement of armed SROs because they do not reflect their placement by the type of school building. The ratio is likely to be higher for secondary school students than it is for elementary school students. To get a more complete picture of school security, three questions need to be answered: How are security staff members distributed across grade levels? How are they mixed with hall monitors and school staff? How are special units, such as anti-gang units, deployed?

The murders at Sandy Hook focused the nation's attention on a small semi-rural elementary school and the threat of an armed invasion. This is an atypical school security event. Armed School Resource Officers are more commonly found in larger middle and secondary schools where they focus more on student misbehaviors that are associated with age (rowdiness, youth-on-youth violence, drug dealing and use, and gang activity) than on armed invasions. Yet, armed invasions do happen in secondary schools. The 15 dead and 23 wounded at Columbine High School in 1999 are bloody testimony to this sad fact.

Columbine High School had an armed SRO and a SRG on site when the shooting started.[13] Soon after the SRO was fired upon, a Sheriff's Deputy, who was nearby writing a speeding ticket, joined the SRO. Most of the killings occurred after the officers engaged one of the two murderers.

In 2001 a SRO stopped and arrested an 18 year-old student who had wounded 5 people in a school office in El Cajon, California.

[13] Terkel, Amanda, "Columbine High School Had Armed Guard During Massacre In 1999," *Huffington-Post*, December 21, 2012.

The point of these two cases is that at times an SRO can stop an assault, at other times they cannot.

The Secret Service's National Threat Assessment Center and the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program launched the Safe School Initiative in response to the Columbine murders.[14] The focus of the Safe School Initiative was on "examining the thinking, planning, and other behaviors engaged in by students who carried out school attacks." The study team reviewed 37 attacks, involving 41 attackers, over a 25-year period beginning in 1974 and ending in June 2000. The goal of the review was to identify pre-attack behaviors and communications from the attackers that might be detectable. The study team concluded that:

- School shootings are rarely sudden, impulsive acts.
- Most attackers did not threaten their targets directly prior to the attack.
- Shooters cannot be easily profiled; there is no accurate or useful profile of students who engaged in targeted school violence; but the team did observe that:
    - Shooters are typically outcasts who have been bullied or have mental health problems, but these attributes alone do not make them shooters.
    - Most attackers had difficulty coping with significant losses or personal failures.
    - Many attackers had considered or attempted suicide.
    - Most attackers engaged in some behavior prior to the incident that caused others concern or indicated a need for help.
- Prior to most incidents, other people knew about the attacker's idea or plan to attack;
- Those who knew of the possible attack did not say anything; and
- Most attackers were stopped by school personnel, as occurred in the February 2012 handgun killing of 3 and wounding of 3 in Chardon High School (Chardon, Ohio).

What was not answered in the Secret Service's Safe Schools Initiative report is the role of high-capacity rapid-fire weapons in the mass murders. This would include both handguns and assault rifles. Also, the report did not envision a shooter who was not a student.

THE COMMON DENOMINATORS OF MASS MURDER

Semi-automatic weapons and high-capacity ammunition clips

The Congressional Research Service's specialist on domestic security and crime policy, William J. Krouse, released a comprehensive review of gun control legislation, gun violence, and the arms market about a month before the Sandy Hook murders took place.[15] The motivation for the report was an expected renewed Congressional interest in the regulations of the civilian arms and ammunition markets following three mass murders and negative Congressional reactions to the "Fast and Furious" gun smuggling scandal at the U.S. Department of Justice.

The first set of murders was the January 8, 2011, killing of 6 and wounding of 3 in Tucson, Arizona. Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords was severely wounded in that attack. The weapon was a 9-millimeter semi-automatic Glock pistol with an extended 33-round magazine. This is the same weapon used in 2007 in the Virginia Tech mass murders. The second mass murder was the July 20, 2012 Aurora, Colorado movie theatre killings, where a lone shooter killed 12 and wounded 58. The killer used a variant of an AR-15 assault rifle, as was used in Newtown. And, finally, in August 2012, an alleged Neo-Nazi killed 6 Sikh worshipers in a temple near

[14] Vossekuil, Bryan, et al. The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative. Secret Service.
[15] Krouse, William J. *Gun Control Legislation*. Congressional Research Service, 2012.

Milwaukee and wounded another three people including a police officer who was administering first aid to a victim. The killer used a semi-automatic Springfield 9 millimeter pistol with a large ammunition clip.

What do these mass murders have in common? The murder scenes were *not* school buildings. The murderers were *not* students. And the weapons were *not exclusively* assault rifles.

What is common is the use of semi-automatic weapons, both rifles and pistols, which fire a large number of shots quickly that are coupled with high-capacity ammunition clips. *The public policy issue appears to be less one of preventing mass murder in a school and more about making it harder to use the tools of mass murder anywhere*.

If arming schools will not work to end mass murders, does identifying people who will become the murderers offer an alternative? Improving identification and working with those with mental illnesses is important, but far from infallible. The results from the Secret Service's report on school shootings clearly states that identifying potential shooters is extremely difficult—the danger of a false positive is extremely high and the danger of a false negative is omnipresent unless a family member or peer turns to authorities.

The mass murders of the past two years help to answer the third question posed in the introduction of this report: Will the National School Shield prevent or deter the wave of mass murder our country has experienced? The answer is no. These murders are not restricted to schools and universities; they have also occurred in churches and temples, a movie theatre and a political rally. The issue is not the place of occurrence; the issue is limiting access to the tools of mass murder.

The NRA has argued that there is really no reason to control access to semi-automatic pistols and rifles or to large capacity ammunition clips. They point out that, as the number of registered guns has increased to an all time high, *accidental* deaths due to firearms is at an all time low.[16] The problem with this argument is that it dismisses a much lower cost alternative to protecting students. This is in banning semi-automatic weapons and large capacity ammunition clips.

Rather than look at the cost estimates presented here as the cost of arming schools, think of it as the cost of allowing the civilian population easy access to rapid-fire weapons—both rifles and handguns, and large capacity ammunition clips. Who should bear the costs imposed through the broad availability of these weapons? Should it be gun owners? Those who want access to military grade weapons? Or should it be those who desire protection from the potential damage their availability causes? The NRA and the firearms industry want those who desire protection from deadly force and taxpayers in general to pay the price.

[16] NRA-ILA Fact Sheet. (2013). *Firearm Safety in America* 2013. (2013)

APPENDIX

Table A-1: Estimated Number of Schools by the Size of their Student Population

Size of School	Total Number of Schools	Public Schools				Private Schools			
		Total	Elementary	Secondary	Combined Grades	Total	Elementary	Secondary	Combined Grades
Under 100 students	11,310	10,657	4,023	4,341	2,293	654	134	31	489
100 to 199 students	10,884	9,500	5,683	2,789	1,027	1,384	574	66	744
200 to 299 students	13,472	11,226	8,526	2,105	595	2,247	1,437	84	725
300 to 399 students	16,980	13,478	11,089	1,927	461	3,502	2,589	108	806
400 to 499 students	18,016	13,561	11,548	1,613	400	4,455	3,446	116	892
500 to 599 students	15,426	11,066	9,352	1,413	301	4,360	3,406	125	828
600 to 699 students	11,868	8,162	6,693	1,255	214	3,706	2,879	131	695
700 to 799 students	8,595	5,634	4,469	999	166	2,960	2,220	121	620
800 to 999 students	10,003	6,334	4,446	1,704	183	3,669	2,615	246	808
1,000 to 1,499 students	8,907	5,388	2,350	2,848	190	3,519	1,814	566	1,139
1,500 to 1,999 students	3,306	2,061	210	1,791	60	1,244	232	501	511
2,000 to 2,999 students	2,387	1,434	44	1,360	30	952	66	520	367
3,000 or more students	1,029	316	4	286	25	714	13	160	541
Total number of schools	132,183	98,817	68,436	24,434	5,947	33,366	21,425	2,776	9,165

Sources:

Number of schools by type: *Digest of Educational Statistics*, Table 91 "Number of public school districts and public and private elementary and secondary schools: Selected years, 1869-70 through 2010-11"

Distribution of schools by enrollment size: Digest of Educational Statistics, Table 241. Public Elementary and Secondary Schools by Type and Size of School: 2008 to 2009

Table A-2: Estimated Number of School Resource Officers by School Size and Estimated Annual Program Cost

		Public Schools				Private Schools			
Size of School	Total Number of SROs	Public SROs	Elementary	Secondary	Combined Grades	Private SROs	Elementary	Secondary	Combined Grades
Under 100 students	11,310	10,657	4,023	4,341	2,293	654	134	31	489
100 to 199 students	10,884	9,500	5,683	2,789	1,027	1,384	574	66	744
200 to 299 students	13,472	11,226	8,526	2,105	595	2,247	1,437	84	725
300 to 399 students	16,980	13,478	11,089	1,927	461	3,502	2,589	108	806
400 to 499 students	18,016	13,561	11,548	1,613	400	4,455	3,446	116	892
500 to 599 students	15,426	11,066	9,352	1,413	301	4,360	3,406	125	828
600 to 699 students	11,868	8,162	6,693	1,255	214	3,706	2,879	131	695
700 to 799 students	17,189	11,268	8,938	1,998	332	5,921	4,439	241	1,240
800 to 999 students	10,003	6,334	4,446	1,704	183	3,669	2,615	246	808
1,000 to 1,499 students	17,814	10,776	4,699	5,697	381	7,038	3,627	1,132	2,279
1,500 to 1,999 students	6,611	4,122	419	3,583	120	2,489	464	1,002	1,022
2,000 to 2,999 students	4,773	2,869	88	2,721	60	1,904	132	1,039	733
3,000 or more students	2,059	631	8	572	51	1,427	25	320	1,082
Estimated Number of SROs	**156,406**	113,651	75,512	31,719	6,419	42,756	25,769	4,644	12,343
Estimated cost: $75,000 per SRO	**$11,730,475,990**								
Estimated cost: $97,000 per SRO	**$15,171,415,613**								

Table A-3: Estimated Number of School Resource Guards by School Size

Size of School	Total Number of SRGs	Public Schools				Private Schools			
		Public SRGs	Elementary	Secondary	Combined Grades	Private SRGs	Elementary	Secondary	Combined Grades
Under 100 students			0	0	0		0	0	0
100 to 199 students			0	0	0		0	0	0
200 to 299 students			0	0	0		0	0	0
300 to 399 students	16,980	13,478	11,089	1,927	461	3,502	2,589	108	806
400 to 499 students	18,016	13,561	11,548	1,613	400	4,455	3,446	116	892
500 to 599 students	16,953	12,162	10,278	1,553	331	4,791	3,744	138	910
600 to 699 students	15,417	10,603	8,694	1,631	278	4,814	3,740	171	903
700 to 799 students	12,883	8,446	6,699	1,498	249	4,438	3,327	181	930
800 to 999 students	17,995	11,395	7,999	3,066	329	6,601	4,704	443	1,454
1,000 to 1,499 students	22,259	13,465	5,871	7,118	476	8,794	4,532	1,415	2,847
1,500 to 1,999 students	9,913	6,182	629	5,372	181	3,732	696	1,503	1,533
2,000 to 2,999 students	11,931	7,171	220	6,800	151	4,760	329	2,598	1,833
3,000 or more students	6,176	1,894	25	1,717	152	4,282	75	961	3,246
Estimated Number of SRGs	148,524	98,355	63,051	32,296	3,007	50,169	27,182	7,633	15,353
Estimated cost: $50,000 per SRG	**7,426,183,488**								

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