

Thank you for having us.

Representatives, there is a pathetic joke going around the OSU student body. It is disgusting, it is crude, and it is bad taste. It is also one hundred percent true, and that is what sickens me. For better or worse, things are opening up after COVID. The joke is something along the lines of:

“The way we know we’re really going back to normal is because the mass shootings started back up again.”

Possibly the one benefit of COVID was the decrease in mass shootings, if only because there were practically no large gatherings to target. Now, things are slowly returning to normal, so the monster wakes again.

Imagine, if you will, a year ago, when COVID was just starting. For all we knew it was everywhere. You never knew when it would strike; it could have even been hiding in your home. Imagine if one of your colleagues came into the chamber last year during that horrible time and suggested we spread COVID to as many people as possible. There would be casualties, but everyone who survived wouldn’t have to worry about a thing. Pretty ludicrous right? Why is it when we replace “COVID” with “gun” things become different? We didn’t do that, because we have common sense.

Kids and guns do not mix. I have many problems with having guns in schools in the first place, but if they have to be there, the person wielding them should be the best there is. Again, using the COVID analogy, in order to solve the pandemic, we went through tens of thousands of possible vaccines, and once a few good ones were found, thousands more hours were put into them before they were distributed. We didn’t just choose some science-y liquid, take a quick look with a magnifying glass, and stab it into our arm. We chose the best, and the best was found, and on top of that we spent days and weeks and months making the vaccine even better at what it did. Only then did we trust it with our lives.

All this is to say that more guns are never the answer. Once we get beyond the select few who are trained and mentally stable enough to use them, especially in a school, we are playing with fire. Imagine there is an active shooter in a school, and the cops show up to stop them. In the heat of the moment, how do the cops know that an armed teacher is an ally and not the shooter? The answer is during the teacher’s autopsy, after they pump twenty bullets into them. If we completely saturate schools with guns, how are the students supposed to tell the difference? You don’t know every teacher in the school. Imagine first graders who have barricaded their door are told by someone brandishing a gun it’s safe, that it’s okay to come out. If they expect teachers to have firearms, they might just do it. And all of that doesn’t even consider the very real chance that firearms are simply misused or that some kind of accident happens, which leads to the next point.

Bad things happen when guns are around. According to a study by the Annals of Internal Medicine, having a gun in the home doubles the chance of homicide and triples the rate of suicide, even when that firearm is properly stored. Forget to lock up the gun once, and bad things happen. Everyone remembers the scenes from those old movies where the students attempt to get confiscated items from the locked drawer in the teacher's desk. Why wouldn't this be any different?

Finally, one must consider the impact on school insurance rates. According to the Washington Post, when one of the first school districts to consider arming teachers announced their plan, their insurance company threatened not only to stop insuring them, but to leave the business of insuring schools entirely. It is already pathetic that parents need to worry about crazy people with guns invading schools and killing their children. Can you, as a parent, imagine getting a call that told you your kid was shot at school? Now can you imagine getting a call that said a teacher shot your kid, either because the teacher thought the kid was the shooter or because the kid was just in the line of fire?

Putting aside the senseless and obscene loss of life we're considering here, can you imagine the public outcry and millions of dollars in liability a school would face if a teacher, even accidentally, shot a student in a firefright or at any other time? Even the best-trained people mess up in firefights. It happens. Let's leave being a hero for the brave men and women in the armed forces.

The solution to there being too many guns is not to add more guns into the equation. It's pretty obvious who is behind this Bill, and I for one am tired of gun manufacturers being treated as reliable public policy makers. You wouldn't bring a gun to church, because it is sacred, and wrong. How is a school any different? We lay down our arms when we go to church so we can learn to be better people, for our creator, for our families, and for ourselves, without having to worry about a killing machine in the room. The answer is just as simple for schools. The answer is less guns, not more. Thank you.