

School shootings: Florida arms its teachers

It's now official, said Katie Mettler in *The Washington Post*: "Florida teachers can carry guns at school." Under a bill signed into law last week over the strenuous objection of most Democrats, Parkland activists, and educators, teachers who volunteer to join Florida's "Guardian" program can undergo a background check, psychiatric evaluation, and 132 hours of training. They will, at least in theory, provide a line of defense against school shooters. A commission formed to investigate the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting in Parkland that left 17 dead in February 2018 recommended arming teachers. Proponents of the new law argued that it took cops 11 minutes to enter the school, during which time the shooter was free to mow down students.



Training teachers in Colorado

File this new law with the "What Could Possibly Go Wrong? Department," said Carl Hiaasen in the *Miami Herald*. Gun enthusiasts fantasize about "a social studies teacher turned marksman, coolly whipping out his Glock and taking down an active shooter," but the reality could be far uglier. Imagine a teacher—"scared and jacked on adrenaline"—firing wildly and accidentally killing fleeing students. Or a kid, "bullied to the breaking point," grabbing the gun from a preoc-

cupied teacher's holster and shooting his tormentors. Or an accident, like the one in Tampa last month, in which an armed school resource officer's holstered gun fired while he was "leaning against a wall in the crowded cafeteria"—fortunately, hitting no one. The "good guy with a gun" fantasy behind this law "is a crock," said the

Palm Beach Post in an editorial. During firefights with criminals, studies have shown, even cops have a shooting accuracy rate of about 20 percent. Imagine what could happen if a teacher tried to play Clint Eastwood and take out "a determined psycho with a high-powered rifle."

"Arming teachers is not the answer" to school shootings, said David Whitley in the *Orlando Sentinel*, but it should be "part of the answer." Bob Gualtieri, the Pinellas County sheriff who led the investigation into the Parkland shooting, changed his mind about arming teachers while putting together a 458-page report. What he found was that "a lot of times, teachers are the only ones in position to confront a shooter." Think of it this way: As the Parkland shooter spent long minutes stalking and shooting his defenseless classmates, "what would a teacher on the inside have given to have a gun?"

Wit & Wisdom

"Inside most people you read about in history books is a child who fiercely resisted toilet training."

Journalist George Packer, quoted in *The Washington Post*

"To pay attention, this is our endless and proper work."

Poet Mary Oliver, quoted in *The Atlantic.com*

"Virtue by calculation is the virtue of vice."

Essayist Joseph Joubert, quoted in *Forbes.com*

"We make out of the quarrel with others rhetoric, but of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry."

W.B. Yeats, quoted in *The Times (U.K.)*

"Don't look back. Something might be gaining on you."

Pitcher Satchel Paige, quoted in the *Lake County, Ill., News-Sun*

"Forever—is composed of nows."

Emily Dickinson, quoted in *Independent.co.uk*

"Even I don't wake up