

GUN VIOLENCE LINKED TO CUTS IN SOCIAL SERVICES

Virginia Tech shooting survivor Colin Goddard was in Eugene for the Million Mom March Against Gun Violence May 8 and said social services such as mental health counseling are “crucial to helping reduce gun violence and need to be as well funded as they can be.”

Goddard, who survived four bullet wounds, is on a national tour as a spokesman for the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. He spoke with *EW* during the march from EWEB Plaza to Owen’s Rose Garden. The march this year was in honor of slain Eugene police officer Chris Kilcullen

Gun violence and mental health services “are absolutely related, even if you look at the death of officer Chris Kicullen by someone who was (allegedly) dangerously mentally ill with a firearm,” said Goddard. “Guns don’t kill people, people kill people, and if that’s true we need to do a better job of checking those people. Mental health services is something that prevents shootings from ever coming about. It helps deal with people before they decide to lash out and violently harm others.”

Goddard said the state of Virginia spends less now on mental health services than it did when the school massacre happened in 2007. “Unfortunately, state legislatures are feeling the pinch and mental health services is usually where they go for cuts,” he said. “That puts everyone at a higher level of danger.”

In his public talk before the march, Goddard said the news about the death by gunshots of Osama bin Laden has gotten worldwide attention, but “more Americans have been killed by gun violence here at home over the past 30 years than have been killed in all the wars we’ve fought overseas in the past 30 years. We march for those killed abroad, and those killed at home; the thousands who are killed every year, for the average of 32 who are killed every day in America, for the 32 who were killed at my school four years ago, for officer Kilcullen, one of the 32.”

Goddard called for better background checks, “limiting the firepower that was created for military use that is being sold to the public,” and banning 30-round magazines.

He concluded saying “I think people are gathered here to day because we’re fed up. We want things to change. And I don’t want people to go through what I went through. We’ve changed nothing since our country’s last major shooting. We should not be surprised when the next one happens.”

While in Eugene, Goddard also showed his documentary *Living for 32* in which he demonstrated how easy it is to take cash into gun shows and buy handguns without ID or background checks. — *Ted Taylor*



PHOTO BY TED TAYLOR

LIGHTEN UP

In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. But in the land of the Tea Party, the king is the blind man and the one-eyed man is a Marxist evildoer. — *Rafael Aldave, Eugene*

news Briefs

KIDS AND RADIATORS

Hillary Johnson, chair of Strong Schools Eugene, spoke at the Million Mom March gathering in Eugene May 8 and said the campaign to pass Measure 20-182 is “about kids and radiators.”

Johnson said she got involved in the temporary income tax for schools issue after visiting the school where her daughter will be going next year and seeing class sizes so big kids had to sit on radiators.

“Then, when I heard kids complaining about not enough school, I knew our schools needed help,” she said, drawing laughs from the crowd. “All across America public schools are suffering from budget cuts that are gutting programs, laying off teachers and shortening the school year. But here in Eugene we have the opportunity to do something about it.”

Johnson said if this measure doesn’t pass, “we’re talking about kindergarten classes of 30-plus 5-year-olds and one teacher. Moms out there: remember your 5-year-olds? Imagine having 30 of them, one adult, and now let’s learn how to read.” She said middle school math classes are expected to grow to 53 kids.

“We cannot starve out schools while we wait for the state to clean up this funding mess,” she said. “We must step up for our schools, our kids and our community.”

— *Ted Taylor*

RUNNING ON IDLE

A bill restricting idling, long in the works in the Oregon Legislature, may be passed as a shadow of its original self. It would also limit what local municipalities could do to protect and control their air.

House Bill 2081, which aims to reduce the amount of time that vehicles can idle, has been “guttled and stuffed,” according to Oregon Toxics Alliance (OTA) Director Lisa Arkin, and it could wind up doing more environmental harm than good. The current version of the bill contains a preemption

clause that reserves idling regulations for the state, superceding local statutes and plans. “It’s not democratic,” Arkin says, “because it takes away the ability of people to determine their own standard of living.”

Lane County commissioners and the city of Eugene oppose the bill with the preemption clause. “The city has a dynamite energy action plan,” Arkin says, but the preemption clause in HB 2081 would prevent the city from fully controlling its own environmental policies. Eugene businesses and organizations have expressed support for idling reduction. Rexius Forest Byproducts, Lane County, the city of Eugene, Sequential Biofuels and Market of Choice are among the groups that have adopted no idling policies. UO has a voluntary no idle policy.

The bill started out with stronger measures resulting from when the 2009 Oregon Legislature passed HB 2186, which ordered the Department of Environmental Quality to determine how to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from commercial trucking. The DEQ formed an advisory committee of citizens and stakeholders, including the Oregon Trucking Association, to develop recommendations.

The DEQ’s original recommendations would have required truckers to gradually phase in technology that would allow their trucks to function — running heating and cooling systems or other electric-dependent processes — without running their engines. Under these regulations, the alternative technologies would pay for themselves with saved fuel expenses, and truckers and their cargo would still be able to rest in comfortable conditions.

During the comment input period, Arkin says the committee added exceptions that negate much of the HB 2081’s intended impact. The bill allows idling for an indefinite period of time when temperatures are below 50 degrees and above 75. Arkin says that other, colder areas have tougher limits. A local ordinance in Dane County, Wisc., for example, allows 15 minutes of idling at temperatures below 40 degrees or above 80 degrees.

In addition to the emission of greenhouse gases, OTA and other groups are concerned about the effects of diesel particulate matter from unnecessarily idling diesel engines. Children and elderly people are particularly sensitive to the respiratory effects of the particulate, which is one reason Arkin advocates for local control.

Arkin says, “Once this bill passes, with its incredibly weak language, there is no opportunity for DEQ to fix parts of the bill that don’t work very well or get public input.” — *Shannon Finnell*


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