

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Editor's note: These are thoughts on school safety from an eighth grade class at Sunridge Middle School in Pendleton. Some have been lightly edited for clarity.

School. School is the place in every person's life where they went to get an education. But now the corrupt people in our society such as outcasts, bullies and the bullied, even people you'd least expect are shooting up schools. It doesn't have to be this way, there are so many methods and ideas we could use and put into effect to prevent this. As Americans we are united as one. If we put our heads together we could all solve this problem by helping the ill and unstable.

— Andrew Williams

Back in the day schools used to be a safe place, but now they are more dangerous than ever. School districts all over the United States are asking themselves, "How do we stop this?" Well, the state should allow teachers who feel comfortable to have concealed carries. This would help prevent school shootings because if there was a shooter in a school building and they happened to get into a classroom, a teacher with a concealed weapon could easily defend themselves and their students. Letting teachers have concealed weapons at school could save many lives.

— Molly Magill

Since the recent school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the media has exploded about arming teachers or making laws more strict. President of the United States Donald Trump has been trying to pass a bill to arm teachers, which in my opinion is the worst idea ever because in order to accomplish that, teachers would have to go through extra training while working daily. I think we shouldn't be able to arm teachers because people think it will work, but it really won't work the way they want it to and will worsen our school shooting statistics.

— Anahi Ponce

Guns are very dangerous and can cause injuries and death. Many of these school shootings that have been occurring are due to kids being bullied or are tired of it all in general. Do you ever see someone getting bullied because of their appearance? Students might shoot up schools because of the way they're treated. It's hard being bullied and not having someone stand up for you because it makes you feel alone and worthless. Not everyone has friends, but maybe you can change that.

— Emily Rodriguez

There have been many tragedies in recent years that have showed flaws in school security. There are things we can do to limit these issues. One way we can make this better is by regulating who can use firearms using mental health and background checks. Another way we can try to dim these issues is by doing more realistic drills so the students know what to do. Perhaps one of the most simple things we can do is try to be nice and pay more attention to the people who don't necessarily "fit in." We need to limit these tragedies.

— Brooke Banks

School safety is an extreme issue in the U.S. although Trump may think more guns for teachers is the way to go, I strongly disagree. If a student were to get hold of a gun they would be putting everyone in harm's way. Also, if a teacher were to go crazy and grab the gun they would be just as dangerous as a criminal. I believe we need to



increase the amount of police officers in each school district.

— Delaney Ellis

I think that schools should make it more of a priority to have students engage with other students that they usually wouldn't talk to or hang out with. Schools could have certain days dedicated to students doing activities or an act of kindness. For instance, you could have once a week, a day dedicated to having students interact and learn about each other. If every student knew there was going to be a day of the week where they wouldn't be left out, then maybe they wouldn't feel the need to take other people's lives in their school.

— McKenna Harrington

The best ways to keep schools safe is by parents and teachers talking to their kids, you know, just ask them how they feel and if they're doing ok at a young age, this encourages kids to talk. Sure, they might just ignore you or maybe just say "fine" or "OK" but it lets them know that you're there for them. Kids making sure to let others participate or try to be kind to others would help too, I know this from experience. Being there for people keeps kids from feeling excluded.

— Christopher Lindsey

You should not have to send your kid to school scared that they might not come back to you. The Florida shooting was an awakening for people. What is terrible about this is it took us one massive school shooting, and 17 kids' lives to have people really start talking about gun control. Do you really think that putting guns right in front of kids' faces, by giving them to teachers will really help? We need better laws, we need to stop giving people the chance to hurt others. Our country has to realize this, and stop endangering others.

— Clara Sams

As a student, I think that school safety is a huge deal, and more anti-bullying programs, and safety drills will be helpful. Bullying is a huge deal in schools, because students are afraid to speak up against fellow classmates. Anti-bullying programs need to advertise more that their program is a safe place for students, so more students will hopefully speak up against bullies. Also, we need more safety drills so that the students and teachers can have more time to practice and

will be ready for the crisis at hand if anything happens. Overall, more programs and drills will be helpful if the schools use them right.

— Keri Kunz

In light of the recent school shooting in Florida, some American students have proposed a nationwide walkout to bring attention and solicit solutions to the problem. Many parents and students dislike our gun laws. For example, most people don't like our concealed carry law. With that, a lot of people think the stronger a state's gun laws are, the lower its rate of gun related school shootings and suicides will be. I personally think if we have our concealed carry and maybe even have armed teachers it could possibly stop some of our gun violence.

— Faith Broadfoot

As you may know, on February 14, Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, was involved in a shooting. Many American students have proposed a nationwide school walkout to put a spotlight on how much gun violence America really has. Studies have shown that many of the school shooters have no access to the mental health help that they need. Meaning that a single counselor doesn't have the time to help every single student. At our school we have one counselor and over 800 kids! That's not enough help for our students. So I believe that we need more counselors in schools to prevent another student from making a bad decision.

— Ady Parsons

Schools should have more police present. If schools had more police present or nearby so the police could respond quicker and prevent many bad situations such as an active shooter in the building, or a threat the police could be around just in case. Teachers could also be armed but that also may not be a very good idea because the teachers could accidentally shoot a student or the bullets may fly through the wall and hit other people.

— Aiden Swope

In response to the recent school shootings, one thing that could lower the risks of school shootings is to make sure all students feel welcomed and supported. For example, the number of school counselors could be increased. When you do this, students would be able to see a counselor

when needed instead of having to wait for counselors to be finished with whomever they're currently meeting with. In our school we currently have roughly 800 students and only one counselor. This makes it so not as many people have the chance to meet with her/him.

— Lucy Oyama

School shootings have gotten way out of control and it needs to stop. There used to be more counselors to talk to about things like bullying, family problems, or have trouble making friends. There used to be three or four counselors and now there are only 1 or 2 per school. Sometimes people just need a friend or someone to talk to. We also need more police officers at our school. If there's a shooting we only have one police officer. Increasing the security and giving someone to talk to can really improve our schools.

— Collin Primus

In response to the recent school shootings, I believe that schools should spend more time engaging students. In order to do so, students should have regular visits with school counselors. This could help counselors recognize the kids that are at risk for possibly causing mass harm. There should also be more places where students can report their concerns for their peers. Having easier access to these resources would make kids feel more secure and not as embarrassed to report someone.

— Julia Naughton

There is a lot of talk about school shootings and how we should resolve it but in reality it's never going away. People saying that we should give teachers guns is smart, but it comes with complications. Our schools aren't built for hiding from bullets, if my teacher had a gun and was shooting, the bullet can go through the wall and injure a child on the other side. I think that there are many different ways to resolve the problem, but arming teachers shouldn't be an option.

— Natalie Sieders

Due to the recent shooting events in Florida, many people have thought that raising the age to purchase a high capacity rifle to 21 might help. However, this fix will only make it a tad bit harder to get a high capacity rifle but not impossible. I believe that with more early intervention and identification of those students who are having troubles will do the most good. Also, if the teachers at the school were trained to notice kids having trouble then they could get someone to help them.

— Ethan Hughbanks

On the day of Feb. 14 a 19-year-old boy by the name of Nikolas Cruz shot up a school in Parkland, Florida, with an AR-15 and brutally murdered 17 people. Now, many people say it could have been easily avoided. I personally feel that if we had more police officers at schools along with metal detectors, situations like this could be easily avoided.

— Jacob Devereaux

I come from a family who gets a hunting tag every year and shoots a deer and so do many others. But, would you rather have a gun and be able hunt while children are being killed, or give up your gun to save possible hundreds? Many hope to use Australia as a precedent in which they have had no shootings in the last 22 years. Of course people are still going to sneak guns in, but it will be way harder if everyone gives them up.

— Tatum Paullus

OTHER VIEWS

Worthy is the Lamb

Every election cycle we say that so and so is fighting for the soul of the Democratic Party, or the soul of the Republican Party. And, of course, most of the time it's not true. Most of the time the fight is over whether the party in question should go to the left or the right on some policy issue, which is important but not really a matter of a party's soul.

But this year it actually is true. The crucial issue of this election cycle is whether the Democratic Party will retain its soul — remain an institution committed to the basic democratic norms — respect for truth, personal integrity, the capacity for deliberation and compromise, loyalty to nation above party or tribe.

These fundamental issues are on the table because Donald Trump put them there.

Trump is a revolutionary figure not because he changed the GOP's position on trade or international engagement. He's morally revolutionary.

In the decades before Trump, the Republican Party stood for an idea: character before policy. To Mitt Romney, John



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

McCain, the Bushes and Ronald Reagan, personal character and moral integrity were paramount. They stood for the idea that you can't be a good leader or a good nation unless you are a good person and a good people.

Trump asked the GOP to reverse those priorities. He asked the Republican Party to accept the proposition that it doesn't matter if your leader is a liar, a philanderer and a narcissist. It doesn't matter if he is cruel to the weak and bigoted toward the outsider. What matters, when you're in a death match in which the survival of your nation and culture is at stake, is having a bastard in charge who understands and is tough enough to win.

The central Republican bet is that Trump's moral nature won't matter. You can be a bad person and have a successful presidency. You can have a good nation without good moral norms. Trump asked for the party's soul, and he got it.

The question of 2018 is whether the Democrats will follow suit. The temptation will be strong. In any conflict the tendency is to become the mirror image of your

opponent. And the Democrats are just as capable of tribalism as the Republicans, just as capable of dividing the world in self-righteous Manichean binaries: us enlightened few against those racist many; us modern citizens against those backward gun-toting troglodytes. Listen to how Hillary Clinton spoke in Mumbai last weekend.

And yet Conor Lamb's victory in Pennsylvania this week gives at least a glimmer of hope that the Democrats may go the other way.

Lamb is a military veteran. I've met several vets running in both parties this year, and they all put nation ahead of party. In an era where the very preservation of our democratic structures is under threat from tribalism, that is the most important issue.

Furthermore, Lamb was careful to put the problems of his district first: the opioid crisis, retirement security, labor issues. "I'm really only thinking about the people who live here. I don't really care what the future of the party looks like," he said.

He emerges from a serious moral tradition. He is a Catholic who attended a parochial school run by the Christian Brothers. "They really make an effort to go out and be with people on the margins," he told The New Yorker's Eliza Griswold.

He campaigned in a way designed to bridge divisions, not exacerbate them. "There was a lot of foolishness in this election and a lot of really cartoonish

campaigning," he told reporters. "And I think by the time of the president's visit last weekend, people were kind of tired of that entire approach."

He embraced issues that grabbed from each political persuasion, for universal health care, against the tax cuts, but also for fracking, against the assault weapons ban, skeptical of the \$15 minimum wage. He opposed both Nancy Pelosi and Paul Ryan.

Now it's obvious that you would run to the center as a Democrat in a heavily Republican district. But it's not obvious that you would keep your integrity in such a tight campaign. It's not obvious that you would put real but unsexy issues like opioids first, above the cable TV symbolic ones. It's not obvious that you would be restrained by democratic norms when the president comes into your district and shreds them.

Moral character is always the same essential things. Putting a higher love, like nation, over a lower love, like party. Going against yourself — feeling that urge to lash out with the low angry insult, and instead rising upward with the loving and understanding response.

Conor Lamb is wrong on a bunch of stuff, but he is a breath of fresh air for this country. This year, restoring character and shared moral norms matters most. Policy is secondary.

David Brooks, *New York Times*