



A Union of Professionals

Arming Teachers

OVERALL MESSAGE:

We need to start with our vision for our schools and for how we want students to feel when they walk through our doors. Schools need to be safe sanctuaries for learning and teaching—not armed fortresses.

I understand people are scared, and they want to feel safe. But arming teachers would give people a false sense of security while making teachers and students less safe.

Since Trump proposed arming teachers, the response from educators and school staff has been nearly universal, even from those who are gun owners: Teachers and staff don't want to be armed, we want to teach and support students. We need to listen to educators and school staff—the people who have been trained to educate and support our children.

KEY POINT: HOW WOULD IT WORK?

If you stop to think about it, it's clear how bad this idea is.

Would kindergarten teachers be carrying guns in holsters, or will classrooms have a gun closet? Will a gun closet be locked? Will the guns in schools be loaded? When you have seconds to act after you hear the code for an active shooter, is a teacher supposed to use those seconds getting her gun instead of getting her students to safety?

Veterans haven't pulled any punches in responding to this idea. One veteran who now works as a substitute teacher is quoted in the *Washington Post* as saying, "The utter foolishness of this idea horrifies me. ... This idea is going to get more people killed, rather than saving a single life."

That assessment is back up by an FBI study that showed that when police officers engage a suspect in active-shooter situations, they are wounded or killed 46.7 percent of the time. These are people who are heavily trained for that situation—imagine what that percentage would be in a school setting.

Even so, no amount of training can prepare a teacher with a handgun to take on someone with an assault rifle—so will teachers carry assault rifles now? And do you really want a shootout in a school? When you think it through, it's clear how flawed the idea really is.

Adding more guns will not make schools safer—it will put more students, teachers and school staff at risk.

KEY POINT: WHO BENEFITS FROM ARMING TEACHERS AND STAFF?

Trump sat down with students and educators from Parkland, but it's clear he didn't hear them. Instead, he immediately proposed a "solution" that mirrors the agenda of gun manufacturers and the National Rifle Association.

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

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NRA leaders and the gun manufacturers want to create an arms race—they want guns in the streets, guns in our homes and now guns in every classroom. They want to turn schools into armed fortresses. President Trump is doing the NRA's bidding.

KEY POINT: WHAT DO SCHOOLS REALLY NEED?

Our schools can play a critical role in students' well-being, but it's by ensuring students have support and opportunity, not by militarizing classrooms.

Kids need to have schools that are equipped to support their well-being, with powerful learning, well-trained teachers, multiple pathways to success, and wraparound services—like counseling, health services, before- and after-school programs and school nutrition programs—to ensure they can thrive.

But while Trump would spend billions to arm teachers, he has cut summer school and after-school programs that support students and keep them safe—including millions of kids who face gun violence in their own neighborhoods.

He proposed cutting Title II funds for teachers' professional development but wants to pay to train teachers to be sharpshooters.

He argues we can't afford school safety programs, school nurses and counselors but can afford guns and bonuses for armed teachers.

We need solutions that make our schools safe sanctuaries where kids can feel safe and supported in their learning and their lives—not war zones or fortresses.