



**March 15, 2018** - In light of yet another horrifying attack on innocent students, Parents Across America (PAA) calls on all parents to step up our efforts to protect our children, and demand our voices be heard and our actions respected. There's no more time for being passive, or being intimidated by school systems, legislators, corporate education reformers and weapons manufacturers. They will not hinder our voices; we need to be heard.

For too long, parents have been marginalized even as we attempt to advocate for our children. Parents who pay close attention to their children's activities and development are mocked as "helicopter parents." Yet how often it is heard that "parents just don't care" for one reason or another. From the very beginning of our children's lives they are protected by laws. For example, all newborn babies, upon leaving a hospital, must be placed in a car seat. Our legislators are very familiar with protecting our children from bodily harm, so what about gun control and lawmakers? Current gun laws are creating profits and not protecting children.

Most of PAA's leaders have at one time or another been labeled as "disruptive," "difficult," or a "problem parent" when we have dared to ask questions at our children's schools, take issue with district decisions, or speak out against policies we consider harmful to children. One of our leaders was banned from speaking at school board meetings for a year simply because of her powerful presentations. Another was unknowingly made the subject of an educational vendor's presentation as an example of a parent who might get in the way of a district purchasing their product. One leader even had her life threatened for opposing the renewal of a principal's contract.

Over the years, PAA has opposed school policies and practices such as grade retention, high-stakes standardized testing, and mass school closings. We have clearly articulated how such policies have proven to be harmful to children and persistently raised these issues with local, state and national policymakers. We have shared our concerns in legislative hearings. We have written countless letters and published op-ed pieces. We know that professional educators support most of these positions. Yet many of these policies continue to be practiced with little regard for our concerns. We also recognize that by design, they enrich a powerful few, and don't actually improve educational opportunities.

Most disgraceful is the refusal of lawmakers to make even the smallest effort to protect our children from the loss of their precious lives at the hands of heavily armed school invaders. Their refusal has everything to do with protecting their own seats and the profits of their sponsors, and nothing to do with protecting children.

Time is up! Time is up for anyone who stands in our way of protecting our children. Parents are the still voices that are and have been crying out. Our voices will be heard as we demand safer policies and practices in our schools. Parents are taking their rightful place as full partners and rights-holders in any decision making that affects our children. As parents we are leading the way. Our children are the future and should be our nation's priority.

Remember that parents not only have power in our homes, workplace and schools. We are not just picking up the mic, we are going to be heard at the ballot boxes all across America by joining with all walks of life, faiths and races in demanding protection for our precious children. Our message is strong and clear: we demand justice for our children, not what is best for corporate America.