

## Opposing view: Guns in schools can save lives

John R. Lott Jr. 7:10 p.m. EST December 25, 2012

Disarming law abiding citizens left them sitting ducks.



(Photo: Handout)

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Has anyone noticed that these mass shootings at public schools increased after the 1995 Gun-Free School Zone Act? Passed with good intentions, banning guns would supposedly make schools safer.

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But law abiding citizens, not criminals, obey these bans. Instead of making places safer, disarming law abiding citizens left them sitting ducks.

Killers go where victims can't defend themselves. In the Aurora, Colo., movie theater shooting, [out of seven theaters showing](#) the Batman movie premiere within 20 minutes of the suspect's apartment, only one banned permitted concealed handguns. The suspect didn't go to the closest nor the largest, but to the one that banned self-defense. Time after time

the story is the same.

With just one exception, every public mass shooting in the USA since at least 1950 has taken place where citizens are banned from carrying guns. Despite strict gun regulations, Europe has had three of the worst six school shootings.

Sometimes, permit holders save lives. Joel Myrick, an assistant high school principal in Pearl, Miss., used to carry his permitted handgun at school, but stopped after the 1995 act passed. When his school was attacked in October 1997, he ran a mile to get his gun stored off school property, and still stopped the attack 11 minutes before police arrived. Before 1996, he could have stopped it sooner.

More than 8.5 million Americans can legally carry concealed handguns. They are next to us in restaurants, movie theaters and stores. Permit holders are law abiding, committing firearms violations at a rate of hundredths of 1%.

Before the 1995 act, states allowing concealed carry let permit holders carry guns in schools. [In four states](#), they still can. No problems ever reported.

As a compromise, over the past 15 years more than 12,000 former military members have gone into public schools teaching through "Troops to Teachers." Let them carry.

Still in doubt? Ask yourself: Would you feel safer with a sign on your house saying "this house is a gun-free zone"? But if you wouldn't put these signs on your home, why put them elsewhere?

John R. Lott Jr. is a former chief economist for the U.S. Sentencing Commission and the author of More Guns, Less Crime.

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