

Six months ago today, my niece Jaime Guttenberg, and 16 other students and teachers, were slaughtered at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida by a 19-year old former student wielding an AR-15 rifle. Since that time, there have been at least 15 more school shootings. As a result, many school districts spent the summer grappling with how to reduce the risk of a catastrophic event.

Tomorrow is the first day of the 2018-2019 school year for Cincinnati Public Schools. Based on automated phone messages from my children's principal, I recently learned that students will be greeted by metal detectors at multiple school entries. I am grateful to CPS for taking our kids' safety seriously enough to do something; it seems installing metal detectors has become a necessary evil due to our country's inability to balance public safety concerns against an overblown interpretation of the Second Amendment.

And so the holistic well-being of our children will be sacrificed because we adults have failed them. I am saddened that our children will now start their day under a cloud of suspicion as they empty their pockets and take off their shoes. I am saddened that it will take hours for them to enter the school building, which will interfere with sleep and instructional time. I am saddened that they need to think about guns every day, and twice on days when they have active shooter drills. I am saddened that many parents feel the need to purchase bulletproof backpacks for their children.

Furthermore, I am concerned that placing metal detectors at school entries is like putting a bandaid on a bullet wound. It probably won't solve the problem. Metal detectors will not protect our children while they are standing in line waiting to go through the metal detector, or in the school parking lot, or on the athletic field. For that we need common-sense gun safety. There are 18 and 19-year old students who attend high school. We should nationally raise the age to purchase guns to 21 so that these students can't bring their guns to the school campus. Many students live in homes where guns are not locked up thus allowing students under age 18 to obtain them. Parents must be required to lock up their guns and be held criminally and financially responsible if their children gain access to them. Also, with the advent of plastic undetectable 3D printed guns, the newly

installed metal detectors will be ineffective.

I am interested in knowing how we are funding the additional costs of metal detectors and school resource officers. Do we now have less money to spend on instructional material and teacher salaries? I would like to propose that the added cost of school safety be paid for by a surcharge on gun and ammunition purchases. In addition, I would like to suggest that those politicians who receive money from the NRA donate those funds toward school safety.

My family has already paid the ultimate price with the shooting death of my 14-year old niece. We are grateful that something is being done to protect our other children. We appreciate the emphasis on hardening the schools and adding school resource officers and additional mental health counselors. But if we truly care about our kids it should be obvious that the pendulum has swung too far. Our children should not have to be wanded and patted down on their way into school while wearing bulletproof clothing and helmets in order to protect unfettered access to guns. We need an "all of the above" strategy that would include school safety, better mental health care, and common-sense gun safety. If you agree with me, I encourage you to #voteorangeinNovember for a GunSense candidate, and end the madness.