



Giffords Law Center Study: Guns Mishandled in Rare Incidents; They Should be Banned From Schools

Using a “man bites dog” story bordering on the hilarious, the anti-gun Giffords Law Center [overreached](#) in its attempt to make its case that guns are dangerous, especially in schools.

Giffords Law Center (GLC) was founded in 2017 upon the merger of the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, a public-interest law firm originally known as the Legal Community Against Violence, and Americans for Responsible Solutions founded by former Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords.



The GLC relied on statistics obtained from the left-of-center Gun Violence Archive (GVA) for its “proof,” published last week, claiming that over the last five years (GVA began operations in 2014) there were more than 60 “incidents” where firearms were “mishandled” by their owners on school campuses.

That is more than enough evidence to convict, according to GLC’s chief counsel: “What this shows is, yes, there’s always the concern of somebody intentionally misusing a gun, but the point I think that these incidents make is that children will be at greater risk in our schools if there are more guns in the schools.”

And, Skaggs added, these incidents of mishandling of firearms were done by “professionals” — security guards employed by the districts. Imagine the horror, bloodshed, and mayhem that would follow if teachers were armed as well: “If these risks of mishandled, accidentally discharged guns exist when we’re dealing with professionals and well-trained law enforcement, the risks will increase by multiples when guns are in the hands of teachers and other poorly trained school personnel.”

To see just how weak the study really is, and how faulty the foundation that allegedly supports the GLC’s agenda is, one need only to get some perspective on the matter. Of the more than 100,000 schools in the United States, nearly half of them have the power to determine whether or not to employ armed guards — school resource officers — or allow teachers, if they care to, to carry a firearm on campus, or both. In its vast undertaking, the GLC, with the help of the GVA, found 60 — 60! — “incidents” that make up its study.

Three of them were in Pennsylvania. Philly.com reported that at the Russell Byers Charter School in Center City, a middle-school student bumped into a staffer’s bag during class last year and realized that it contained a firearm! That “incident” was included in the study. At a Washington County high school, a student found a loaded gun that a security guard had left behind in the men’s restroom. That outrageous “incident” made its way into the study. And in Chambersburg in Franklin County, a group of elementary-school students found a teacher’s loaded gun on top of a toilet! One more “incident” included in the study to prove the point.

It gets worse. Much worse. Three students were injured in a school in Seaside, California, when a



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teacher accidentally fired his gun in a classroom during a safety demonstration. In another instance, a first grade substitute teacher in Blountsville, Alabama, was arrested after “his gun accidentally discharged” and a bullet fragment hit one of his students.

That’s it.

A perusal of the other “incidents” reveal how far GLC, using the data from GVA, has to reach to prove its point: guns are dangerous, teachers are stupid and not to be trusted, professionals make mistakes, and therefore no one should be allowed to own a gun.

Consider:

Under the heading, “Guns left accessible to children” one finds:

Glenwood School | Princeton, West Virginia:

March 28, 2019 — A substitute teacher was arrested after telling another staff member that he had a gun in his briefcase. No shots fired.

Van Horn High School | Independence, Missouri:

February 28, 2019 — A school counselor was arrested after having sexual contact with a teen. In the process of her arrest, a loaded handgun was found in her purse. No shots fired.

Kingston High School | Kingston, Michigan:

January 19, 2019 — A grandfather left a handgun at a high school during a basketball tournament. A woman found the gun on the floor of the bleachers. No shots fired.

Under the heading “Guns discharged unintentionally”:

Blountsville Elementary | Blountsville, Alabama:

March 22, 2019 — A substitute teacher unintentionally discharged a gun in a first grade classroom. One student was sent to the nurse’s office after being struck by a fragment.

Jefferson Davis Middle School | Jacksonville, Florida:

February 14, 2019 — A false threat led to a brief lockdown at a middle school. While investigating the scene, an officer’s gun unintentionally discharged. No injuries.

Simonsdale Elementary School | Portsmouth, Virginia:

November 20, 2018 — A parent brought a gun to an elementary school. The gun unintentionally fired, and the bullet ricocheted, striking a woman in her lower body.

Under the heading “Guns mishandled during discipline”:

Barcelona Elementary School | Albuquerque, New Mexico:

December 20, 2018 — A school custodian chased six kids who he allegedly thought were trying to break into the school. The custodian pointed a gun at the kids and made threatening statements about shooting them. No shots fired.

ECHO AFL Academy for Learning | Dolton, Illinois:

November 28, 2018 — A school security guard pulled a gun on a student after breaking up a fight at school. The guard also threatened to kill the student while holding them by the neck. No shots fired.



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Oxford High School | Oxford, Michigan:

October 3, 2017 — During a physical struggle between a student and an officer, the officer's gun unintentionally discharged when the student tried to grab it. No injuries.

The GLC included incidents where guns were “used in times of personal stress or conflict” to bolster its argument:

W.T. Chipman Middle School | Harrington, Delaware:

December 5, 2018 — A middle school wrestling coach got into an argument with a 13-year-old student during practice. The coach tried to choke the victim, and pulled out a handgun and pointed it at the student in the restroom. No shots fired.

Eastern Technical High School | Essex, Maryland:

November 12, 2018 — A school resource officer shot and killed himself at school when students were present. The school was placed on lockdown, but no students or other staff were harmed.

Norwalk High School | Norwalk, Connecticut:

September 4, 2018 — A cafeteria worker was arrested after threatening to shoot a gun in the school. Officers discovered a .22 caliber rifle in the trunk of the cafeteria worker's car. No shots fired.

Finally the report included “Other incidents of guns brought onto campus”:

Nandua High School | Onley, Virginia:

March 27, 2019 — A substitute teacher was arrested for bringing a gun onto campus. No shots fired.

Southwest Edgecombe High School | Pinetops, North Carolina:

March 18, 2019 — A school custodian was arrested for having a loaded gun in his car. Other staff members reported that he made threats against them. No shots fired.

Gray Collegiate Academy | West Columbia, South Carolina:

February 14, 2019 — A contract employee with the school's food service vendor was charged with carrying a gun on school grounds. No shots fired.

This type of research designed to promote a point of view is called “padding.” Nothing in the report mentioned how many crazed individuals decided *not* to commit mayhem because they knew that personnel at a particular school were armed. After all, it's hard to prove that something didn't happen, for whatever reason.

No reference was made to John Lott's groundbreaking study (revised and updated) entitled *More Guns, Less Crime*, which persuasively argues that the mere presence of a firearm reduces the chances of gun violence, and that there is a sharp decline in overall violence as more and more Americans take advantage of their right to keep and bear arms.

Arguing that these incidents are indicative of the need to ban guns from schools is using flawed logic. Some of the above-listed events, such as people being arrested for bringing a gun on school grounds and making threats, would have happened no matter what, i.e, the people were arrested, so there were clearly some form of no-gun policies to being with. Other incidents demonstrate an almost cringe-



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worthy lack of proper training and common sense. Leaving a gun on the toilet after using the restroom, and using a loaded gun with a bullet in the chamber during a “safety demonstration” in a classroom should make any gun owner scratch his head and wonder how this could happen. Hopefully those teachers or security guards lost their jobs over these incidents, or were at least strongly disciplined. The solution to much of these issues isn’t “ban guns,” but rather *responsible use and handling of guns*. One must also keep in mind that, statistically, such incidents are extremely rare, illustrating that a vast majority of guns on school campuses are handled safely and without incident.

But this doesn’t matter to Giffords Law Center. In an e-mail promoting this highly flawed, incomplete, and borderline silly study, GLC calls it “indisputable evidence that armed adults frequently mishandled guns in schools.”

What is really indisputable is that adults also “mishandle” motor vehicles — far more dangerous instruments than a firearm — resulting in the deaths of more than 37,000 people in 2016, an average of 102 per day!

The study would be laughable if it weren’t for the fact that so many take such drivel seriously.

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