



Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police

On December 14, 2012, a horrific event took place in Newtown, Connecticut. That event took our country to a visceral awareness of vulnerability the likes of which have not been experienced since 9/11. The horror was magnified by the targeting of innocent children. This awareness of vulnerability has created a cause for action, emboldened by the consciousness that our schools should be safe havens for our children, and not the stage for evil opportunists to perpetrate harm; on that there is no debate.

As a country, we are now confronted with determining the means by which our vulnerability is lessened and our children are safer. Unfortunately, arriving at those determinations comes with complexities that, at best stir controversy, and at worst, turns American against American.

The Wyoming Association of Sheriffs and Chiefs of Police (WASCOP) seeks to de-emphasize the political wrangling over gun control, and turn the focus to purposeful answers to how we can improve our children's safety. To that end WASCOP members:

- 1) Fiercely support and defend both the U.S. and Wyoming Constitutions.
- 2) Support the strong gun heritage that has existed in Wyoming for generations and we continue to stress gun safety as a paramount tenet of gun ownership.
- 3) Acknowledge that unless we set our schools up like prisons, if a person is determined to enter a school with evil intent, they will succeed unless someone is there to stop them.
- 4) Do not believe banning certain weapons will create the safety we seek; it will only serve to continue the gun control controversy and prolong the failure to focus on the real issue.
- 5) Support a statewide effort to conduct a target hardening approach to our schools, identifying best practice methods.
- 6) Endorse legislation that will assist in financing an increased "armed" presence at the schools.
- 7) Look to our law makers to provide legislation based on meaningful discourse that addresses the complexity of evil, mental health, public safety, and preservation of civil rights.

Community policing tenets affirm that broad based involvement by law abiding citizens is the solution to such complex societal issues. It is counterproductive to legislate law abiding citizens out of the process by hindering their inherent right to self defense. We will remain patient as our country muddles through the process of determining its official response but as for us, we will endeavor to keep our communities safe while preserving our civil liberties.