

# National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives



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## PRESS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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### **The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) Expresses Concern Over Arming School Teachers**

**ALEXANDRIA, VA** – Americans are reeling from the tragic school shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School just over a week ago. Two primary trains of thought have emerged in response to this event that has shaken the awareness of parents, students, elected leaders, law enforcement, gun rights groups and advocacy organizations across the country—arm teachers and provide more law enforcement on campuses or increase gun regulations that limit access. The White House weighed in this past week, with President Donald Trump suggesting arming teachers, even if it requires paying them “a little bit of a bonus” to do so.

The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) is against arming teachers. "The unintended consequences associated with this policy procedure would be immense. The level of training required to be adept at using a firearm and managing stress in a threatening and potentially deadly situation takes a lot longer than the general three-day or three-week course most Americans with firearms have completed. Motor skills (including reaction time) are often impaired when faced with unstructured, highly volatile, and dangerous events. Even for law enforcement officers with specialized training hitting the intended target can be very difficult when conditions such as active shooter, large crowds, lack of knowledge of potential other threats (lack of backup, potential explosives, multiple assailants, etc.) are present," said NOBLE President, Clarence E. Cox, III.

Furthermore, the New York Police Department is the nation’s largest police force and among the best trained, yet its own study showed between 1998 and 2006, the average hit rate was 18 percent for officers in a gunfight. Cox continued, "This suggests that motor skills are subject to degradation during levels of high stress. New York City police statistics show that simply hitting a target is a difficult challenge in uncertain environments that can impair the skills of the most

well-trained officers." In 2006, in cases where police officers intentionally fired a gun at a person, they discharged 364 bullets and hit their target 103 times, for a hit rate of 28.3 percent, according to the department's Firearms Discharge Report. Gun violence in school settings poses a threat for police officers and these are specially trained officials, the threat for teachers who are not trained under the same conditions as law enforcement is even greater.

If the evidence-based research pointing to the difficulty in managing stress and firearm use in high pressured environments isn't enough to raise eyebrows for proponents of arming teachers, fiscal responsibility should be. The cost of training teachers in basic firearms training is around \$71.8 million. For more specialized training (the type that would employ crisis scenarios), the cost skyrockets to \$1,000 per trainee, that would equal \$718 million to train every certified teacher in America today. This doesn't include the price tag for providing the guns themselves (which varies depending on weapon type and manufacturer). Teachers across the country are crying out for more support to do the work they are primarily tasked with----teaching. The teacher led campaign #ArmMeWith is a direct plea to legislators, policymakers and the Trump Administration to assist teachers in the funding areas that matter the most, in-class education supports and social-emotional learning. President Trump's proposed budget would cut \$3.6 billion from the Department of Education. In order to achieve those proposed spending cuts, the President would potentially implement two major education cuts he proposed last year: the elimination of Title II teacher grants and the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21st CCLC, Title IV, Part B). The Title II teacher grant includes the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants Program or SEED (Title II, Part A). The SEED grant program provides funding to increase the number of highly effective educators by supporting the implementation of evidence-based preparation, development, or enhancement opportunities for educators. 21st Century Learning Programs have proven extremely successful in communities across the country through providing after school and summer educational enrichment and social emotional support systems for youth. 21st Century Community Learning Centers are often one of the first stops for children in need of a myriad of supports that simply cannot be provided with classroom instruction alone. And at a time when state budget cuts are driving school closings, teacher layoffs, and dismantling school stability if we are to advocate for more funding to support teachers we need to do so where they need it most, equip them with the tools needed to successfully educate not police. "Teachers are tasked with providing an educational platform for our children, we in law enforcement are tasked with providing a safe environment for all students, staff and visitors and this recent tragedy should not suggest that we mix these two very honorable and important professions,"- Cox adds.

Further, NOBLE endorses the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) opposition to arming teachers based on the following:

1. Law enforcement officers who respond to an incident at a school could mistake for an assailant a teacher or any other armed person who is not in a uniform.
2. Anyone who hasn't received the extensive training provided to law enforcement officers will likely be mentally unprepared to take a life, especially the life of a student assailant.
3. Firearm skills degrade quickly, which is why most law enforcement agencies require their officers to practice on a shooting range frequently (as often as once per month), under simulated, high-stress conditions. Anyone without such frequent, ongoing practice will likely have difficulty using a firearm safely and effectively.

4. In addition to maintaining marksmanship, ongoing firearms practice helps law enforcement officers overcome the physiological response to stress than can reduce the fine motor skills required to accurately fire a weapon.
5. Anyone who possesses a firearm on campus must be able to keep it both ready for use and absolutely secure. Law enforcement officers receive training that enables them to overcome attempts to access their weapons.
6. Discharging a firearm in a crowded school is an extremely risky action, with consequences that can include the wounding and/or death of innocent victims. Law enforcement officers receive training and practice in evaluating quickly the risks of firing. They hold their fire when the risks to others are too high.

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### **About the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives**

Since 1976, The National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE) has served as the conscience of law enforcement by being committed to justice by action. NOBLE represents over 3,000 members internationally, who are primarily African-American chief executive officers of law enforcement agencies at federal, state, county and municipal levels, other law enforcement administrators, and criminal justice practitioners. For more information, visit [www.noblenational.org](http://www.noblenational.org).

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