



Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick Responds to Santa Fe School Shooting

by TEXAS LT. GOV. DAN PATRICK, May 21, 2018



We got the awful news Friday morning that there had been a school shooting in Santa Fe, South of Houston, in Galveston County. Prayers went up immediately all over Texas as we prayed for the injured and grieved for those we knew were lost and their families who were dealing with unimaginable pain.

I drove toward Santa Fe thinking about what a tough year it has been for Texas. We experienced Hurricane Harvey, the greatest natural disaster in the history of our country, followed by the evil we saw at Sutherland Springs. Now we have lost 10 lives at Santa Fe and 13 more were injured.

Every Texan is asking the same question – are we doing everything we can to assure this doesn't happen again. For some the answer is easy. Just take away our access to guns and the problem will be solved. That is naïve and simple-minded.

Taking away our protection will not make us safer – it will make us all easy targets. As we saw in Sutherland Springs, the best defense against a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun. In Santa Fe, the two armed security guards who were part of the school safety protocol were able to neutralize the shooter in a short amount of time, helping make sure that more lives weren't lost.

Do we need background checks and reasonable regulation, absolutely, but I do not believe -- and most Texans do not believe -- that restricting access to guns will make us safer. One of the

students who survived at Santa Fe put it very well today. She said the shooting was not a gun law issue, it was a "...this kid was able to get into the school very easily issue."

We must approach this problem in a more comprehensive way and start thinking out of the box.

Devaluation of Life

The unprecedented violence we are seeing in our schools stems from a devaluation of life in our culture. God has been removed from our schools, abortion, the ultimate devaluation of life, is believed by many to be a "right" and the family unit is in tatters with many children growing up without fathers.

Our children are digitally bombarded daily with violence from movies to horrific video games. Video games – many of which allow gamers to simulate killing for hours -- make more money than movies and music combined. According to a Pew Study, 97% of teens watch these games an average of two hours a day. Of course, Hollywood and the digital gaming industry refuse to take any steps to turn down the volume on this violence regardless of the impact it is having on our children.

Making Our Schools Safer

We have taken aggressive steps to ensure that people with guns are not allowed in court houses and public buildings, in airports, on planes and even major events like concerts and big sports games. However, all over Texas, too often our schools have very little restricted access and most entrances are not policed. That must change. We must have adequate fire exits, of course, but we must start treating entrances to our schools in the same way we treat entrances to any large venue.

We should also consider staggering start and ending times at our schools to diminish the crush of students at the doors.

And we should utilize every resource we have to protect our children. In Texas, it is legal for teachers to carry a firearm in their classrooms after proper training to protect their students and themselves. The decision to allow teachers to carry is made locally by school boards and parents. Districts need to look closely at their current practice. On Friday evening, I visited the hospital room of a young man who had been shot who told me that there was a teacher nearby the art class who was a former marine. He acted quickly to block the entrance to his classroom and assure that none of his students were shot. The young man believes that had that teacher had a gun, the shooter could have been stopped more quickly. His parents and classmates who were also visiting all agreed that teachers should be armed.

Moment of Silence Tomorrow at 10AM

I am working with Governor Abbott who is convening a series of Roundtable Discussions on School Violence beginning next week to discuss these issues and many others. Governor Abbott has called for a Moment of Silence tomorrow at 10AM to honor the victims of the school shooting in Santa Fe. Wherever you are, I urge you to participate.