

staff editorial:

# We just want to talk...

The National Rifle Association (NRA) is a non-profit, pro-gun organization that was founded back in 1871, and has been pushing for the upholding of the Second Amendment ever since.

But, after the last 10 years of gun violence, particularly at the high school and college level, they've faced criticism -- not for upholding the the Second Amendment of the Constitution, but for not listening to the cries of protesters calling out for a change after multiple school shootings.

Still, one month later, nobody is listening.

Here at the *Hyphen*, we make it a priority to open lines of communication to every party, especially when talking about such heated issues such as our country's gun laws.

But in attempting to do so, we were shut down.

After multiple attempts to contact the NRA for their thoughts on the recent school attacks, no feedback was received. Even our advisor, Mr. Wes Scott, reached out to them to no avail.

So we tried local.

Gold & Guns, a jewelry and gun shop located a half-mile away from Jeffersonville High School, denied to comment as well. (Might we add the scariest part: they did not even ask our high school journalists for any type of identification as we walked in, despite the Indiana law stating only those 21 and up can purchase handguns.)

The Liberty Belles Women's Gun Club, an NRA-sponsored club located in Clarksville, did not comment after multiple phone calls and emails sent out to them, as well. The *Hyphen* failed to get a SINGLE comment back from three different locations about what should be done in the future, and what safety concerns we, as high school students, have.

Why doesn't anyone want to talk about it? Why are we taught for 12 years to talk through our issues, but get doors slammed on us when questioning a company about something that could be potentially so life and death with students?

Unfortunately, we think it's simple: they don't want kids to be the reason their guns are taken away.

The fact of the matter is nobody wants to talk about a subject where kids are the

victims, and student safety is the main concern. But it's also a touchy subject, especially when Constitutional rights are being discussed.

As difficult as it might be for store owners, politicians and other adults to go through, it's a discussion that needs to happen. And it needs to happen now.

In the end, each student and staff member of every high school nationwide can probably come to an agreement that during their eight-hour day, they all want to feel safe.

As school shootings have now become more frequently reported in the news, it's inevitable for students to want some type of change, so that themselves and their peers don't become the next statistic.

But we can't do that unless the lines of communication are open.

Whether or not this change is the banning of firearms, or perhaps even increasing them among trusted adults in schools, gun control is the phrase on everyone's lips. Staying silent is not going to decrease the casualties.

It's clear there is a problem.

When students at Jeffersonville High School feel hesitant to walk out into the halls when a fire alarm goes off, or when parents feel uneasy watching their kids leave to start their day, it's clear there is a problem.

There are a myriad of changes that could be argued for improved school safety, and we understand that there are alternatives to taking away everyone's firearms.

But how can these changes be made if we can't even get the conversation started? Why are others arguing something that affects us?

We get it. We're young. We make some dumb decisions sometimes. (Tide Pod Challenge, anyone?)

But we're not naive. And we're definitely not stupid.

So in this issue of the *Hyphen*, we are making it a point to start the conversation. Listen to us; actually hear *us*. Involve us.

Change is happening, because the policies we have now simply aren't sustainable. It's time to talk.

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## Mission Statement

*"The Jeffersonville High School newspaper, the Hyphen, is an open student forum for the exchange of ideas and opinions. The Hyphen will strive to publish fair, balanced, and accurate news for the interest and importance to the student body."*

## 2017-18 Hyphen Staff

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Recap:

# Tragedy in Florida

By **Braxton Troutman**
 @TheHyphenNews

*On Feb. 14, school shooting and gun violence was once again thrust into the national spotlight. Seventeen members of the Parkland, Fla. high school were killed, with 15 others injured*

For most students, school is a place to learn, interact with other students, and to take on the tasks given to them by their teachers.

But on Feb. 14 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, students realized it wasn't just another day at school.

At approximately 2:18 p.m., former 19-year-old student Nikolas Cruz pulled the fire alarm, luring several students out of their classrooms. Under the assumption it was just a normal fire drill, students were soon met with the worst possible situation at a school: a gunman.

Once students were out of the classrooms, they were met by Cruz carrying an AR-15-style assault rifle. Cruz began firing rounds into the crowded hallways.

Police were called to the scene at 2:53 p.m. after receiving several calls from students and faculty inside of the school. Students were sending out distressful and frantic Snapchats and texts to friends and family.

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“My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting. No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school.”

**- President Donald Trump**

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Local news stations immediately responded to the scene. Police units, S.W.A.T., National Guard, EMS, firefighters and families of students surrounded Marjory Stoneman High School soon after. Police told the public to avoid the school and to stay away, as the shooter was still at-large and the school on lockdown.

At 3:36 p.m., police and S.W.A.T. units entered the school to the sound of frightened students, some hiding in classrooms and bathrooms, while others were hurt and injured on the floor. Police went classroom to classroom, allowing students and teachers to exit the room and out of the building. Students were told to run out with their hands up and drop their backpacks into a pile to be searched.

The big question remained with the shooter, who the police couldn't locate.

Police later learned Cruz, wearing a burgundy-colored shirt, ran out with other students. Cruz eventually left the school grounds, went to a local McDonalds and sat down.

Cruz was eventually detained by a Coconut Creek police officer and arrested.

After clearing the school, officers and families came to the harsh reality that there were 17 casualties, with roughly 15 others rushed to the hospital.

At around 3:50 p.m., President Donald Trump sent out a Tweet: “My prayers and condolences to the families of the victims of the terrible Florida shooting. No child, teacher or anyone else should ever feel unsafe in an American school.”



## March 14 Walkout?

By **Aaleiah Winford**
 @TheHyphenNews

*March 14 marks one month since the Parkland, Fla. massacre.*

*Now, high school students are making sure their voices are heard*

Students from schools around the country are planning to walk out of class in remembrance of those who were affected in the Parkland, Fla. school shootings.

Greater Clark County Schools put out an official statement on Thursday, March 8. The district-wide messenger sent to parents said that middle and high schools would hold some sort of vigil in school, but students who walk out of the building will be facing truancy consequences.

Despite no official walkout, some students are happy to have the chance to honor the victims from Florida.

“I feel like it's a nice thing to do for victims that are hurt, and we're paying them some type of homage,” says junior Christon Mitchell.

The nationwide school walkout was created by Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School students to raise awareness for school safety. Jeff High's goal is to honor the victims of the Florida shooting, and giving students the opportunity to voice their opinions and take a stand against gun violence.

“The school-wide (stand against violence) is smart.

It's something good to do for our community and our school because people are sick of not being able to be safe at school. I know I am,” sophomore Briana McGhee said.

As students participate in the school walkouts, awareness will be raised for school violence and gun violence while taking a stand for their beliefs and to protest for a place they go everyday to learn and get their education to plan for their future.

### The truth... about school shootings

- As of print, there have already been 28 school shootings where a gun was fired in 2018.
- The 2018 average for school shootings in the United States is currently two per week.
- Fourteen shootings have taken place at high schools across America.