THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE NOT ENOUGH: HOW MASS SHOOTINGS HARM COMMUNITIES, LOCAL ECONOMIES, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

HYBRID HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES

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THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS ARE NOT ENOUGH: HOW MASS SHOOTINGS HARM COMMUNITIES, LOCAL ECONOMIES, AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

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Tuesday, July 19, 2022

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT
AND INVESTIGATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES,
Washington, D.C.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 2:03 p.m., in room 2128, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Al Green [chairman of the subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives Green, Cleaver, Tlaib, Garcia of Illinois, Garcia of Texas; Emmer, Mooney, and Timmons.

Ex officio present: Representative Waters.

Also present: Representative Axne.

Chairman GREEN. The Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations will come to order.

Without objection, the Chair is authorized to declare a recess of the subcommittee at any time. Also, without objection, members of the full Financial Services Committee who are not members of the subcommittee are authorized to participate in today's hearing.

Today's hearing is entitled, "Thoughts and Prayers Are Not Enough: How Mass Shootings Harm Communities, Local Economies, and Economic Growth."

I now recognize myself for 4 minutes to give an opening statement.

Friends, when innocent children are being mass murdered in schools, thoughts and prayers are not enough to assure parents that children will come home safely from school. When worshippers are mass murdered in places of worship, thoughts and prayers are not enough to protect worshipers while worshipping. When shoppers are mass murdered in marketplaces, thoughts and prayers are not enough to prevent future marketplace mass murders and the consequences that follow. This year alone, we have had 354 mass shootings in 200 days, including 16 mass murders, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

Friends, it has become painfully clear that a good guy with a gun to take out a bad guy with a gun, the kill or be killed philosophy, is not the solution. And just as we must concern ourselves with saving lives, we must also concern ourselves with the impact on the quality of life after a mass shooting.

I thank Mayor Brown for being with us today. The tragic mass shooting at the Tops Food Store in his hometown of Buffalo, New York, had an immediate impact on the community it serves. The Tops Friendly Markets store, once the hub of commerce within his community, was forced to shut down for 2 months. According to the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, a chamber of commerce in the Buffalo area, during those 2 months people were displaced from jobs, and their community faced a food accessibility challenge.

It is important to understand the impact that mass shootings have on unemployment. Research has shown increases in unemployment by almost 2 percent in areas that have experienced mass shootings. Mass shootings also have been shown to impact home values. Research has shown that mass shootings can lead to a decrease in area housing prices of up to 3 percent. Mass shootings at schools have been shown to cause a decline in home values of up to nearly 8 percent within that school district. This impact occurs because the school where a mass shooting occurs might then be considered unsafe or stigmatized. Families might be less inclined to move to that school district, and other families might choose to leave. Teachers become more inclined to leave the district.

In summary, mass shootings can have a devastating impact on communities. They hurt businesses, causing resignations, layoffs, litigation costs, and increased costs of insurance. Property values decrease and the tax base erodes, leading to cuts in fire, police, and sanitation departments. My hope is that by examining these issues today, we might come to understand how mass shootings have a greater harmful impact than we previously knew, and I trust that this understanding will cause us to strive to do even more to prevent mass shootings. I look forward to hearing from our witnesses on this urgent matter.

At this time, I now recognize the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Emmer, for 5 minutes for an opening statement.

Mr. EMMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you to the witnesses for coming to speak with us today. I look forward to hearing your testimony.

Cities and communities across the country are dealing with a surge in violence. In fact, over the past 2 years, the United States has seen an increased rate of all types of violence and crime. In 2021, 68 out of 70 of the largest United States police jurisdictions saw increases in violent crime, which includes homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. More specifically, we are seeing this rise in crime in cities where large-scale theft, looting, and robbery are plaguing communities.

We frequently hear stories of businesses in cities like Chicago or San Francisco which are forced to relocate, shut down, or limit their hours to protect their employees and manage the extra costs of security just to operate every day. Many businesses, particularly the smallest businesses, are faced with the wrenching decision of whether to close and abandon the community or stay and deal with the risks of remaining open. Those decisions aren't just based on dollars and cents.

Business owners must consider the safety of their employees and their customers. When a business closes its doors, the entire community feels the effect. Jobs are lost. Customers must find some-

where else to get the things they need. A vacant storefront invites more criminal activity. The value of homes in the area goes down, and a community begins to deteriorate. In the face of such rampant crime, law enforcement, unfortunately, does not often have the resources necessary to protect communities, from staffing issues to an ability to enforce the laws. Democrats were the party of Defund the Police, and these political attacks against law and order have depleted law enforcement morale and resources.

Even though our committee does not have jurisdiction over crime, I welcome the opportunity to discuss how violent crime affects a community's economy. Our witnesses can help us understand how violent crime affects local economies and limits the services that are available to communities across the country. For many communities, addressing crime and violence starts with State and local leadership. Soft-on-crime policies have made matters worse in jurisdictions where crime rates are highest. The absence of the threat of meaningful prosecution affects the safety of residents and businesses.

Today, we invited a business owner who has dealt with these challenges in Minnesota for several years now. Brian Ingram has managed to keep his restaurant doors open to the community of St. Paul despite an unbelievable series of crimes against his business, his employees, and his customers. I think we will all benefit from hearing his story.

And so again, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you for holding this hearing today because Americans should never, never feel this level of unsafety in their own communities. We must return to a society of law and order. I yield back.

Chairman GREEN. The gentleman yields back. I now recognize the Chair of the full Financial Services Committee, the gentlewoman from California, Chairwoman Waters, for 1 minute.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you very much, Chairman Green. To Mayor Brown and all of the witnesses here today, I thank you for coming to help us deal with this very difficult and complicated issue. The first thing I must say is that not all Democrats have said to defund the police, so let's be clear about that. From the mass shootings in Buffalo, New York, to the recent tragedy in Highland Park, Illinois, these horrific incidents have been far too frequent. In this year alone, there have been more than 300 mass shootings, devastating families and communities. The reverberations of loss and grief are felt long after the last bullet.

Neighborhoods, local businesses, and affected areas struggle to cope with changing dynamics within the community, including negative impacts to the housing market, store closures, additional costs for security, and an unexpected loss of revenue and employment. I urge my fellow Members of Congress to stop the bleeding and take action to support healing in these communities across our great nation. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Chairman GREEN. The gentlelady yields back.

Today, we welcome the testimony of our distinguished witnesses: Abel Brodeur, an associate professor at the University of Ottawa; Byron Brown, the Mayor of the City of Buffalo, New York; Sarah Burd-Sharps, the senior director of research at Everytown for Gun

Safety; Ruchi Singh, an assistant professor at Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia; and Brian Ingram, the founder and CEO of Purpose Driven Restaurants.

Witnesses are reminded that their oral testimony will be limited to 5 minutes. You should be able to see a timer that will indicate how much time you have left. I would ask that you be mindful of the timer so that we can be respectful of both the witnesses' and the committee members' time.

And without objection, your written statements will be made a part of the record.

Mr. Brodeur, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to give an oral presentation of your testimony.

STATEMENT OF ABEL BRODEUR, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Mr. BRODEUR. I would like to thank the subcommittee for holding this hearing and having me talk to you about this topic.

I am an economist, and I am a professor at the University of Ottawa, and in my research, I study the economic consequences of violent crime, gang-related crimes, domestic terror attacks, and mass shootings. And today, I want to talk to you about the economic consequences of mass shootings in the United States.

In a study, our senior staff looked at mass shootings from 2000 to 2013, talking about hundreds of mass shootings, and we are interested in documenting what happens to the local economies. And what we find is that after a mass shooting, the consequences are tremendous and permanent. We find a decrease in employment of about 2 percent, a decrease in earnings of 2.5 percent, a decrease in housing prices, and also a decrease in wages, potentially due to a decrease in productivity, which I will come back to.

Overall, we find that these communities, these counties that were hit by mass shootings lost about 100,000 jobs in the period of 2000 to 2013, so a lot of jobs, and this raises the question of why? What are the mechanisms through which mass shootings can affect these local economies, and we look at different channels. One of the first channels that we look at is consumer sentiments or the way people in these communities feel about their economy, about local businesses. And we find in the months and years after mass shooting, these become more pessimistic, negative.

We also look at the role of the media. I have looked at the national media coverage of all of these mass shootings myself for ABC, CBS, and NBC. And what we find is every single minute of coverage of these mass shooting exacerbates dramatically the consequences on local economies. And also, many studies now are showing that additional media coverage leads to more copycats and other shootings. We also look at which type of industry is affected, and we find it is mostly the private sector, the service industry, and manufacturing. Many different sectors, and many different businesses are affected.

Our findings potentially lead to different policy prescriptions. The first one I want to talk about is media coverage. I think we need to have some sort of policy that limits the type of media coverage of these mass shootings, a John Doe type of policy, meaning that we should refrain from talking about the perpetrators, their

identity, their motives, and the strategies used. Everything is available online easily on Wikipedia. In terms of other types of policies that will be important, I think we need to think about why productivity goes down. And one of the things we did was look at a survey from the CDC that asked hundreds of thousands of Americans every year about their health, their mental health, their physical health, and many other questions, and we matched this to the mass shooting data. And what we found is, of course, mass shootings decreased mental health in the short run, but also in the long run.

And we find that respondents in these communities increasingly report for months and years that they are not able to do their normal activities, like working and taking care of their children, and these effects are permanent for years. And this explains why productivity potentially goes down or earnings go down. They go down because jobs are lost, but also because productivity is going down. People are missing work, missing days of work and are less productive at work. So, we need public policy to provide financial support, but also medical support, not only in the short run, but also potentially in the medium- and long-run, helping these communities financially and providing them medical care.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brodeur can be found on page 28 of the appendix.]

Chairman GREEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Brodeur.

Mr. Brown, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to give an oral presentation of your testimony.

STATEMENT OF BYRON W. BROWN, MAYOR, CITY OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK

Mr. BROWN. Chairman Green, Ranking Member Emmer, Chairwoman Waters, Congressman Cleaver, and members of the House Financial Services Committee, I am honored to be here today to discuss the harmful impact of mass shootings on communities, local economies, and economic growth.

On Saturday, May 14, 2022, the unthinkable happened in Buffalo, New York. Our family members, friends, and neighbors were simply going about their business, grocery shopping, when, without warning, they were interrupted by deadly gunfire. An outsider opened fire and killed 10 innocent people and injured 3 others. It was a moment that changed our community forever. Fifty-two days after the devastating shooting, we reopened the Tops Supermarket. However, nothing we do will ever repair the heartache for the families who lost loved ones, but we will always stand united with them. In the City Of Good Neighbors, we are a loving and resilient community, a community that will always remember. We will never forget.

This horrific tragedy highlighted many issues that have impacted our community, and Black and Brown communities nationwide. Across our country, we have seen over a century of underfunding by the Federal Government in Black and Brown neighborhoods. This has led to unacceptable increases in gun violence, segregation, crime, poor health outcomes, and generational poverty. These fac-

tors made Buffalo a target for the May 14th shooter, whose stated goal was to kill as many Black people as possible.

Every mass shooting has a significant economic impact. However, the mass shooting in Buffalo was different. It was an act of domestic terrorism fueled by racism and White supremacy. This was perceived to be not only an attack on Black Buffalo, but an attack on Black America. In just the 2 weeks after the shooting, City departments—police, fire, and sanitation—spent over $500,000 of unbudgeted dollars on overtime and other related services. That amount has continued to significantly increase as City Government continues to play a vital role in our community's healing process and public safety needs.

Gun violence has a lasting and negative impact on survivors, and experiencing these events in childhood has a lifelong impact on the psychological well-being and labor market participation of those involved. The May 14th shooting in Buffalo will impact an entire generation of children. This event has the potential to harm Buffalo's already economically-disadvantaged Black community and further grow inequality. We must do whatever we can to combat this and provide the East Buffalo community with the funding for services such as counseling, educational enrichment, and lost wages. There should be Federal funding to address the economic damage to communities that suffer mass shootings.

I applaud President Biden and the bipartisan group of Members of Congress for supporting the Safer Communities Act. While this law will save lives, it doesn't go far enough. I urge you to work with the Biden Administration on reinstating an assault weapons ban. Assault weapons are exceptionally deadly firearms that are commonplace in mass shootings. An assault weapons ban may have prevented the May 14th massacre. I also urge you to ensure that the long-ignored and underfunded Black and Brown communities, like East Buffalo, have the funding and support that they need to ensure recovery from this tragedy and to prevent and treat the trauma of that violence that has held back communities of color for generations. In addition, anti-Black hate crime legislation must be passed to address White supremacy and remove these hateful ideologies from our society.

Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mayor Brown can be found on page 79 of the appendix.]

Chairman GREEN. Thank you, Mayor Brown.

Ms. Burd-Sharps, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to give an oral presentation of your testimony.

STATEMENT OF SARAH BURD-SHARPS, SENIOR DIRECTOR OF RESEARCH, EVERYTOWN FOR GUN SAFETY SUPPORT FUND

Ms. BURD-SHARPS. Good afternoon, Chairman Green, Ranking Member Emmer, and members of the subcommittee. Thank you for the opportunity to share our recent work on the economic cost of gun violence. It is an honor to appear before you to testify. My name is Sarah Burd-Sharps, and I am the senior director of research at the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the United States.

With tragic and numbing regularity, we hear about shootings on our streets, in grocery stores, schools, hospitals, and too many other places. Every day in America, roughly 300 people join the toll of those killed and injured with guns. Today's focus is on mass shootings, of which there were 27 in which 4 or more people were killed, excluding the shooter, over the course of 2021, resulting in 136 fatalities. But I want to be clear. While devastating, costly, and fear-inducing far beyond the location where they occur, they make up less than 1 percent of all gun deaths and injuries.

Without a doubt, the human cost of gun violence is the most devastating. No dollar amount could ever fully convey the cost for families and survivors of gun violence, but examining the series of economic consequences is essential as well for understanding just how extensive and expensive this crisis is. Our hope is that this research will help guide you and your colleagues as you weigh policies and actions to build safer communities. We worked with a leading health economist estimating the cost of injuries in the U.S. today, as well as with Federal datasets on gun deaths and hospitalizations, and extensive peer-reviewed research to understand these costs.

The economic consequence to our nation of America's unrelenting gun violence epidemic is $557 billion a year, year after year. The government share of these costs paid for by taxpayers is $12.6 billion a year. That is nearly $35 million each day that could instead be invested in essential public goods like education, workforce development, and building healthier, safer, and more sustainable communities. These figures are conservative estimates. They represent the lifetime costs associated with gun violence. Starting at the scene of a shooting are things like emergency medical care, and police investigations, continuing on to the long-term health care and criminal justice costs necessary. And they also include estimates for pain, suffering, and the loss of well-being of victims and their families.

Our report released today provides full details, but our estimates don't even begin to include the wider ripple effects, and those wider costs aren't marginal. As you just heard from Mayor Brown, and if you talk to any school superintendent or pediatrician in a town that has experienced a shooting, they can produce a long list of costs that extend far beyond the immediate items we are counting: costs to address the trauma of children afraid to go back to school; neighborhood businesses and home values; and the larger reverberations on all of those who live in a neighborhood where gun violence happens or who share an identity with someone who is the target of a shooting.

While not everyone directly experiences gun violence, we all pay an economic price for it. The annual cost of gun violence in the U.S. is $1,698 for every resident. However, in States with stronger gun laws and fewer deaths and injuries, we found the economic toll to be less than half this amount. Policies that save lives also save on costs. While we are so grateful for the actions Congress took recently to address gun violence, there is still much more we can do. Half of the deadliest mass shootings over the past 5 years are committed by a shooter under age 21. The Senate urgently followed the House's lead and passed legislation to raise the age to purchase all

firearms to 21. Further, the recent tragic mass shootings revealed a litany of advanced warning signs. The Senate should pass the Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act, which would create a civil process that would allow loved ones and law enforcement to intervene when they see the signs across the country.

Our research clearly shows we are spending precious funds on an epidemic that brings nothing of benefit and plenty of heartbreak and shattered lives. We have placed ourselves at a severe economic disadvantage in the globally-competitive economy with these enormous outlays.

Thank you again, Chairman Green, Ranking Member Emmer, and members of the subcommittee for allowing me to testify today.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Burd-Sharps can be found on page 82 of the appendix.]

Chairman GREEN. Thank you, Ms. Burd-Sharps.

Ms. Singh, you are now recognized for 5 minutes to give an oral presentation of your testimony.

STATEMENT OF RUCHI SINGH, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, TERRY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

Ms. SINGH. Chairman Green, Ranking Member Emmer, and members of the subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. I am honored to contribute to the discussion on this important topic. I am Ruchi Singh, assistant professor of real estate at the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia. I have conducted academic research on real estate economics and the economics of crime since 2016. I will be drawing today on the findings of my own research and on evidence from the relevant academic literature on mass shootings and gun violence. My comments today are about the economic effects of shooting, specifically in the context of schools and about considerations that should be part of devising appropriate policies. I am currently working on a paper studying the effects of mass shootings in schools on residential real estate prices.

A number of academic studies have shown that crime, in general, impacts house prices negatively. This is probably unsurprising to most people. However, a mass shooting is not a typical type of crime. It is unlikely to be repeated at the same place. Nevertheless, my co-authors and I found that house prices in the affected school attendance area declined following such an incident. Our preliminary estimates show that mass shootings at schools lead to an average decline of 2.4 percent in house prices over the next 4 years. We also find evidence suggesting that the negative impact on house prices starts to fade away around 7 years after the incident.

In the study, we define a mass shooting as an incident with three or more victims who were either injured or killed, excluding the shooter. Moreover, if one considers all episodes involving the discharge of a firearm in schools, the number is substantial. Starting from the Columbine incident in 1999, and continuing through May 2022, an estimated 311,000 students at schools have been exposed to gun violence during school hours. A number of academic studies have shown that students who are exposed to such shooting episodes suffer significant negative consequences. For example, a recent study co-authored by researchers from the University of Texas

at Austin, Northwestern University, and Stanford University found that exposure to a school shooting leads to higher rates of chronic absenteeism and to an increased probability that students repeat grades over the next 2 years.

These students also experienced negative long-term impacts: they were less likely to graduate from high school; less likely to enroll in college; and less likely to graduate from college. Moreover, they also had lower earnings, and they were less likely to be employed at the age of 24 to 26. Other researchers have also found similar evidence of lower test scores and increased absenteeism as a result of exposure to a school shooting incident. Furthermore, there is evidence that the students experience a deterioration in mental health and increased antidepressant usage. More generally, being exposed to violent crimes, including those that may not involve guns, has also been shown to negatively affect students' educational achievement and their long-term outcomes.

I now turn to things to think about in terms of policies to reduce school shootings. The finding of another research paper of mine suggests that one way to reduce violent crime around schools is by placing civilian guards. Specifically, my co-authors and I analyzed the effectiveness of the Chicago Public Schools Safe Passage Program. This program draws upon parents and other adults from the local community to act as civilian guards around schools during arrival and dismissal times. We find that these extra eyes on the street reduce crime, especially violent crime around schools. Moreover, the program resulted in improved school attendance.

In thinking about ways to reduce the number of school shootings, policymakers need to be aware that there are different kinds of such incidents. For example, community policing is likely to reduce targeted and crime-related shootings, but it will probably not be effective in reducing indiscriminate shootings. Therefore, policies aiming to reduce school shootings will have to use multipronged approaches.

Thank you. I look forward to your comments and questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Singh can be found on page 90 of the appendix.]

Chairman GREEN. Thank you, Ms. Singh.

I now recognize Mr. Ingram for 5 minutes to give an oral presentation of your testimony.

STATEMENT OF BRIAN INGRAM, FOUNDER AND CEO, PURPOSE RESTAURANTS

Mr. INGRAM. Thank you, Chairman Green, Chairwoman Waters, and members of the subcommittee. My name is Brian Ingram, and I own a collection of restaurants in Minnesota. I thank you for this opportunity to share some of my experiences over the last couple of years.

My entire life has been dedicated to food and coming together over a meal. A few years ago, I had a vision of opening restaurants that not only would serve our guests, but also serve our community. We made a commitment to donate 3 percent of our total sales back to those in need within our community. In 2019, my wife and I formed Purpose Driven Restaurants. We opened a concept called, "hope."

Right before COVID hit, we chose to shut our restaurants down and serve our community, and that ended up being about 300,000 free meals, and 2 million pounds of food, not to mention all the outreach we did within shelters. And I don't say any of this to say, look at what we have done. I would say, look at what we have done as a community. Sarah and I would have run out of money instantly when we were doing this. It took our community standing with us to move forward. We stood with our city when George Floyd was tragically killed. We fed protesters. We fed our National Guard. We fed our police officers and first responders. As a person of faith, I believe that we are called to feed all of God's people.

As businesses began to reopen in the Twin Cities, crime began to escalate. We saw it over and over: our windows being shot out in our restaurants; criminals using the parking lot of one of my restaurants to be a place where they would kind of gather, and then they would head out to loot and destroy our cities. I would make calls to 9-1-1, and we would be told that they have no officers to respond. Crime has now become a daily part of life. All seven of my restaurants and my office have been robbed numerous times on many occasions by the same criminal. The same criminal would be released within 24 hours of robbing my restaurant and then show back up a few weeks later to rob me again.

The lack of law enforcement's ability to respond—we would share footage of these folks breaking into our restaurants. These folks would walk in very lackadaisical. They had no worry that the police were responding or that they were even coming. I have watched them walk into our restaurants with no fear, search out our employee break rooms, steal purses, steal car keys, and then head out and steal that very car as employees follow them and the thieves basically dared them to do something.

I have shown up at our restaurant, oftentimes arriving before the police, because we don't have enough officers to patrol our city. I have had to walk in harm's way with people in our building. Far too often, I have sat with our employees if they have been attacked as they are trying to go home with their hard-earned tips. I have sat with our guests who have been carjacked. Our late-night traffic in our restaurants has dropped off about 50 percent because we no longer feel safe being open after 9:00, 10:00 at night, so a restaurant that used to be open until 1:00 a.m. now closes at 10:00 p.m..

Our customers are choosing suburban dining over fears of violence in our city. We are now looking at locations outside of the Twin Cities. Minneapolis has become a ghost town. I was recently offered a restaurant in Minneapolis for one penny, and I said no to it. The violence in our city—we have paid for funerals for young kids who have been struck by gun violence 7 times in the last year. I am heartbroken by the mass shootings and unrelenting violence going on around our country. I am even more heartbroken about things like fentanyl that are happening in our city.

I lost my kitchen manager a month ago to an accidental fentanyl overdose. We had his drug dealer's name, and his phone number. He texted him and said, "Something is wrong with my drugs." He said, "You will be fine." He died that night. Forty-thousand people

have died from fentanyl in the last year-and-a-half. That is 109 people a day. That is a mass murderer.

I am asking you to address the real problems. Criminals fear nothing in our cities. They know responses will be slow. They know that if they are caught, they will be back out on the street, typically within 24 hours. Our hope is that all of you will come together and figure out how we can stop crime in our cities, before our cities are gone. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Ingram can be found on page 87 of the appendix.]

Chairman GREEN. Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Ingram.

I now recognize the Chair of the full Financial Services Committee, Chairwoman Waters, for 5 minutes for questions.

Chairwoman WATERS. Thank you so very much, Mr. Green. As I listen to these witnesses, it is so painful to see and understand the gun violence, not only the responsibility of those with guns to not allow them to be used by children, to put them in safe places, to not own guns, necessarily. As a matter of fact, I am a person who does not believe that the Second Amendment guarantees you the right to have a gun, and I think that the Congress of the United States is divided on the gun issue.

There are so many different ways that we have tried to deal with the issue of gun violence, and we don't have the votes to get rid of automatic weapons. We don't have the votes to get rid of weapons that have been used in war, that have found their way into a police station. We don't have the votes, basically, to make this country safe. And these mass killings are absolutely painful. To see children and individuals shot down and killed for no reason other than someone does not like the color of their skin, or someone is mentally ill, or someone wants to rob them. All of those reasons are totally unacceptable.

Mr. Green, you are taking a look at another aspect of this violence, dealing with what it does to the community, what it does to businesses, and how those people who work so very hard to strengthen our communities are basically undermined when these mass shootings take place. People move. Businesses close down. People are afraid. And so, I took one issue that I wanted to deal with today and it is to talk about how some of these guns are purchased.

The gun that was used in the Uvalde, Texas, school shooting was sold by a firearms manufacturer that offers loan installment payment plans to purchase their products under the consumer finance company, Credova. These buy now, pay later financing programs make guns more accessible to purchase, only requiring a simple credit check with interest-free loans paid back in 3 to 4 monthly installments. Fintech loan providers like Credova are not involved with nor do they have insight into the background checks conducted by retailers who sell guns. Credova itself claims on its website that approval takes seconds for most customers.

As I have said, this is only one small aspect of this issue. But of course, I think the easier guns are to obtain, the ways to get them cheaply, the ways for young people to go on the internet and find ways to purchase and pay later, are issues with which we are going to have to deal. I wish that all of you coming here today

could leave saying, "I was at the Congress of the United States, and I heard that they really are going to take some serious steps, and they are going to deal with gun violence." But you are not going to leave with that message today.

The message that you are going to leave with is, "They talked a lot about how they are absolutely devastated by the killings that take place." As Mr. Green said, prayers are not enough. And you are going to leave saying, "I know that many of them pray." But Mr. Green is right; prayers are not enough. We all have a role in trying to deal with this violence. The United States Congress must step up to the plate, and must be committed to the idea that we could stop this violence and we could take guns off the street. But it has not happened yet.

For those of you in communities where there are gun manufacturers, where there are gun stores, I think it makes good sense for the community to get organized and tell them that they do not wish to have them in the community. I think it makes good sense to tell parents that if you see your child acting very strangely over a period of time, if you know they have some issues, if you know that you have been ignoring the fact that they love guns and they spend hours watching violence on television, et cetera—parents, relatives, everybody has to step up to the plate and say, this child needs some help. There is something wrong here, and stop ignoring it. There are so many ways that all of us must play a part in dealing with the gun violence.

Thank you for being here today. And thank you, Mr. Green, for holding this aspect of it, that all of us should not be able to go to bed at night and rest seeing the violence that is going on, the lives that are lost, and the businesses that are destroyed, and the neighborhoods and communities that are literally torn apart because of it.

I yield back the balance of my time, Mr. Green.

Chairman GREEN. The gentlelady yields back. The Chair now recognizes the distinguished ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. Emmer, for 5 minutes.

Mr. EMMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you again to our witnesses for appearing before this subcommittee.

Look, crime is running rampant across our country. It is imperative that Congress focus on the serious, damaging impact that lawlessness has had on our communities. We must restore order. As we examine the impact crime has had on local economies, we are grateful to Mr. Brian Ingram for joining us today from St. Paul, Minnesota. He is the only business owner on this witness panel who has firsthand experience in trying to live and trying to operate a business in a nearly lawless environment.

Catastrophic crime rates are not unique to the Twin Cities in Minnesota. Crime is plaguing communities across the United States, from New York to San Francisco and cities in between. Americans in urban areas face increases in carjackings, theft, burglaries, vandalism, and assault. This has led to a divestment in local economies because safety trumps all other priorities, and many people cannot safely run a business in such dangerous conditions. That divestment hits low-income communities the hardest.

How did we get here, and why is crime running rampant across the United States? We locked down our citizens for a year, and stripped them of the in-person activities that help keep people out of a life of crime: school; extracurriculars; community engagement; and mental health resources.

Then, Democrats championed a nationwide campaign against law enforcement, which has made the police force so politically unpopular that many communities like St. Paul, Minnesota, where Mr. Ingram lives and runs his businesses, don't have enough sworn law enforcement officers to protect the community. As we heard from Mr. Ingram, when residents call 9–1–1, it is not uncommon to be told that no one can help them.

Mr. Ingram, can you please share with the subcommittee what changes you had to make to your business to protect your employees and customers from crime?

Mr. INGRAM. Yes. One of the things we have had to do, of course, is shortening our hours, even bringing in our staff a little later. We have a breakfast restaurant that used to open at 6:00 a.m., and now we pushed that back to 7:00 a.m., just because we wanted it to be light out before our staff would come in. Our restaurant is closing at 10:00. We have a pub that would primarily do business late at night. That is now closed. Security cameras, alarm systems, we have spent so much on those types of things, but, no, it doesn't deter anybody.

Mr. EMMER. Can you—

Mr. INGRAM. The safety stuff we have done has no deterrence.

Mr. EMMER. Do you have a number for how much these additional measures have cost you?

Mr. INGRAM. Hundreds of thousands of dollars. I don't know that I can even put a number on the sales. We have two new restaurants. We are reinvesting. Those restaurants we are planning on not keeping open. That is going to lead into the millions of dollars until something changes in our city.

Mr. EMMER. Lastly, have other businesses in your community reacted to the violence?

Mr. INGRAM. So many of them are gone, and what you are seeing so much is in minority parts of the city, restaurants are closing at a rapid pace. I believe it is 1 in 3 now that are closing down, and typically, those are in areas that are underserved. We are seeing restaurants, we are seeing businesses closed day in and day out, and it continues to grow. Right now, Minneapolis is a ghost town.

Mr. EMMER. You talked to many restauranteurs like yourself. Are they experiencing similar issues?

Mr. INGRAM. Yes, I believe all of us are—a yarn store across the street from us has been robbed, and Little Mailbox, et cetera. It is across-the-board, and there is no business. We had seven robberies within a year and thought that we were being targeted. And we went out to our neighborhoods, and heard, "Nope, I got robbed yesterday." "No, I got robbed the day before." And nobody seems to want to share that message and talk about it.

Mr. EMMER. Wow. Thank you for doing it. These catastrophic levels of crime across this country have made people afraid to go to work, to eat out with their families, to park their cars in the street, and simply to just be outside when it is dark. This is no way to

live. But let's be very clear: Democrats have normalized this lawlessness and demonized law enforcement. As a result, law enforcement in many of these urban areas, like the Twin Cities, does not have the resources they need to keep people and their businesses and property safe. When residents call 9-1-1 for help, they are often told that no one can come out.

Mr. Ingram, thank you for your time today. As Democrats have politicized safety and championed the destructive Defund the Police movement, your perspective is invaluable as a business owner doing your best to support your community. I yield back.

Chairman GREEN. The gentleman yields back. The gentleman from Missouri, Mr. Cleaver, who is also the Chair of our Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development, and Insurance, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLEAVER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The title for this hearing, or at least the subtitle is, "Thoughts and Prayers Are Not Enough," which I agree with politically and theologically. Moses guided the children of Israel, Hebrews, today's Jewish people, to the banks of the Red Sea, and he stood there praying—14, 15 Exodus—praying. And God says to Moses, shut up, stop praying and start moving. And I did something last week I don't feel good about, but I just couldn't do it anymore. When we were asked to stand for thoughts and prayers in the Chamber after another killing, I went outside, and I did my own prayers, as I do every evening at my apartment.

I think it is important for everybody to understand that I don't know how this explosion of people trying to defund the police has become so much of a position that I'm not sure is healthy. I am not saying anything about who has ever said, but I have heard it from three or four people. It doesn't make sense, so I don't embrace it.

Mr. Ingram, thank you so much. I saw the news report on your work and thank you very much for what you are doing in your community.

Mayor Brown, thank you for being here. You are on center stage of the American drama as a mayor. I grew up in public housing, and I got into it with somebody. We were fighting. So, he picked up a brick, and threw it and it hit me. Close up, you can see I grew a moustache to hide the stitches; I had 15. And I have said this to my own children, that if that had happened today, he wouldn't have hit me with a brick, he would have shot me. And then, instead of me going to the hospital and coming back and becoming friends, in the out, I didn't shoot him or anything else. I don't think I had ever seen a gun, a real live gun when this happened to me at 14 and 15.

Do you think, Mayor, that Buffalo would be in a better position if your police department did not have to deal with the fact that just about everybody they stop is armed, and everybody they go to deal with, who are messing up the businesses, are armed?

Mr. BROWN. Congressman Cleaver, there are too many guns on the streets of communities all across the country and in Buffalo. Our police have had to deal with too many illegal weapons on the streets. And responding to Ranking Member Emmer, we did not defund police in the City of Buffalo. In fact, I have increased the budget for the police department.

With the mass shooting in Buffalo at the Tops Supermarket, our police responded within 1 minute of the 9-1-1 call going out. And if not for the quick response of the police and fire departments, many more lives would have been lost in our community. Police were able to convince the shooter in Buffalo to turn himself in and not go back into the store, not go down the street, and they were outgunned by this individual who had an assault rifle. The individual was wearing military-grade body armor. He was encountered in the store by a security guard, who was a retired 30-year police officer of the Buffalo Police Department, who got off 11 shots. But because of the military-grade body armor, they had no effect on this individual, and he was able to kill the security guard in the store. But if that security officer had not engaged this White supremacist shooter, his stated intent in a manifesto that he left would have been to kill many more people in the community.

So yes, our police are engaged all too often with people who have illegal weapons. And in many instances, the weapons start out as legal weapons someplace else and are stolen, they are then sold, and they become illegal weapons on our streets, terrifying and harming innocent citizens and tying up our police department who have to defend the community.

Mr. CLEAVER. Thank you. And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman GREEN. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from South Carolina, Mr. Timmons, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. TIMMONS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Ingram, first off, I want to commend you for the phenomenal way you have served your community through some really difficult times. The last few years is truly inspiring, and I want to thank my friend, Ranking Member Emmer, for inviting us up for this subcommittee today.

The year 2020 was very challenging. It was just one of the most challenging years we have faced, and there is no reason to sugar-coat it. The pandemic and the resulting economic downturn paired with the social unrest happening all at the same time was rough on all of us, but especially for the Twin Cities.

I want to pick up where Mr. Emmer left off. You talked about how your businesses had to keep your employees and customers safe, the cost associated with all of this, and how your actions compare to other businesses. Can you talk about how the local government's response has been specifically? I know many elected district attorneys are reinventing the role of the prosecutor from a government official who supports and enforces the rule of law to an official who gets to cherry pick which laws are worth enforcing.

Mr. Ingram, do you take issue with the fact that some business owners, like yourself, may be harmed by soft-on-crime policies, and has this been an issue for the business community in the Twin Cities?

Mr. INGRAM. Thank you for that question. And, yes, I think many of us are afraid to even talk about violence with the prosecutors because suddenly it become so politicized, and it makes us appear to be a certain way. But we have reached out to the judges, and the prosecutors, and asked, how do you let the person who robbed me and has a track record—I believe he had 50 priors—out within 24 hours? You don't even give me a heads-up. I posted on social media

pictures of him breaking into my restaurants. Maybe he is now coming for me and my family because he is angry with us.

We are petrified, within the Twin Cities, that these criminals are being released, and we are actively trying to catch them and posting their photos on social media. And now, maybe we are the victim another time, for sure, when they come back to our business and rob us again.

Mr. TIMMONS. So in that instance, the best practice across the country is that victim advocates reach out and notify the victim that the defendant or the alleged offender has been released. Did that occur?

Mr. INGRAM. It did not occur. I believe I was notified about a week later, and they said, just so you know, this gentleman is at a halfway house—I believe it was about a mile from where we live—and then we were notified, and I believe they said he had an ankle bracelet on.

Mr. TIMMONS. That is not best practice, and generally speaking, from my time as a prosecutor, you notify the victim immediately. And I am sorry you had to deal with that. I hear from businesses of all shapes and sizes that they can't find employees. The labor shortage is often their top issue. I imagine that is the same for you. Can you talk about the issues you have faced in recruiting and retaining employees, given the challenges that we have already discussed? Is it harder to get people to work for you knowing that there is lawlessness and that the district attorneys are not going to enforce the rule of law?

Mr. INGRAM. Yes. For sure, it is hard to staff our restaurants. Nobody wants to work late at night. We didn't just randomly decide to walk away from that business and that opportunity. It is because employees didn't feel safe. It is because guests didn't feel safe. The hospitality industry has been devastated over the last year-and-a-half. And now, we have employees who are actively leaving because when they walk to a bus stop, or they get on a Lime scooter and head home, they are assaulted. We have had employees assaulted on their scooter when they got on to head home from their night shift. We have had employees assaulted at subway stations and bus stations. If you don't feel safe leaving work, you are going to choose not to work there anymore. You will catch a 9:00 to 5:00 job, or you will stay on unemployment.

Mr. TIMMONS. We hear stories all over the country about cities that are not enforcing the rule of law. Businesses are just closing up and saying, this isn't worth it. Have you dealt with that yourself? Have you thought that this isn't worth it?

Mr. INGRAM. Yes. We feel very called within our community to serve our community, and we feel very called to come together over a meal and bring that back to our communities. Have I now moved some restaurants to the suburbs because that is where our guests are moving? We have done that, but we feel very called to serve our community, and we feel called to be here and to stand up for our community. If we don't stand now, and we don't start enforcing the rule of law right now, we are not going to have a city to return to. So yes, we could leave. We have thought about it, but what does that do to our community, and what does it do to the people whom we love and we want to serve?

Mr. TIMMONS. Sure. Thank you. I appreciate you being here, and I think the pendulum swings back often, and we need to enforce the rule of law. We need to keep people safe. That is just very basic rule of law and government. With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back. Thank you.

Chairman GREEN. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Garcia, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

[No response.]

Chairman GREEN. Mr. Garcia, you are now recognized for 5 minutes.

[No response.]

Chairman GREEN. Mr.Garcia, if you can hear me, would you wave?

[No response.]

Chairman GREEN. Okay. We understand that you may be having some technical difficulties. With this understanding, Mr. Garcia, we will work with you to eliminate those difficulties. And in the interim, the gentlewoman from Texas, Ms. Garcia, who is also the Vice Chair of our Subcommittee on Diversity and Inclusion, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you so much for bringing this very, very critical hearing forward today. I think it is as the Chairwoman Waters said: Nothing could be more important these days than trying to go beyond the prayers and thoughts into real action. And I would hope that this hearing will result in some proposals that we can put forward before the Congress because here we are once again to discuss gun violence, an issue that has devastated our communities, and our nation, and our families too frequently, for just far too long. And as we have covered here today, it is important that we consider long-term impacts of mass shootings as the initial shock and outrage fades from the public domain.

My home State of Texas is tragically no stranger to such despicable acts of violence, as we most recently saw in Uvalde. The tragedy in Uvalde is an unthinkable one, but we must not let it fade to an unspeakable one. We will continue to fight for justice for the entire community impacted. And I am glad that today we can take time to consider the long-term impacts to the surrounding area.

In Texas alone, Mr. Chairman, and it is your home State as well as mine, the annual cost of gun violence is $23.7 billion, or about $839 per person. I am confident that we can all think of better ways that this money could be spent, like educating our children, because schools should be about books and not bullets. It is our duty to prevent such widespread gun violence, both for the safety of our constituents and for their economic success.

I know that the chairwoman mentioned the shooter in Uvalde, and, Mr. Chairman, I read the Texas House Committee report over the weekend, and it found that there was no legal impediment to the attacker buying two AR-15-style rifles, 60 magazines, and over 2,000 rounds of ammunition when he turned 18, most of which he did online in preparation when he was still 17. Online. And as she said, some of these platforms are allowing installment sales. And the real question that I have on my mind is, where did he get all

that money, because I totaled up what he bought, and it was around $5,000. So, is it, Mr. Brodeur?

Mr. BRODEUR. Yes.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Can you shed some light on how financial technology companies could actually help us prevent illegal firearm activity? That is why we have you as an expert, and the rest of the panel, if anybody wants to help.

Mr. BRODEUR. Yes. It is not an easy question. If you look at the characteristics of perpetrators of mass shootings, many of them are in poverty, unemployed, and some are really surprised to hear about the socioeconomic characteristics of this specific shooter. If we are trying to use technology to make it harder to buy guns, I am not entirely sure it is going to be feasible, or that there are easy ways to make it harder to buy guns without legislation, to be honest.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Should it be so easy to just go online? He was 17-years-old, and the AR-15 rifle and some of the bullets and things—one was $2,054. Another purchase that he made was $1,081.42. Why is it so easy to just go online?

Mr. BRODEUR. All of the information about previous shootings is online. Strategies used in previous shootings are online. It is quite easy to get a credit card in this country, much easier than other countries, to be honest. Someone can get credit easily and buy things online. We are talking about usually, perpetrators who are very young, maybe 21-years-old on average, depending on how we define a mass shooting.

These people are looking mostly for attention. They are on different networks. For instance, in my research, I look at networks of neo-Nazis, and I will join different networks online. All of the information is shared. It is so easy to get that information. What you can try to do is try to limit these networks. You mean how people will access information online, but in terms of limiting what can be bought online without limiting credit, it's easier to take your parents' credit card. I just don't see it, to be honest.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Okay. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, I am out of time, but I do have some questions if there is a second round.

Chairman GREEN. The gentlewoman's time has expired. The gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Garcia, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GARCIA OF ILLINOIS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I apologize for the glitch I had earlier, but I want to thank you for holding this hearing and, of course, for discussing this critical topic of mass shootings in America.

There have been over 340 mass shootings so far in 2022, and that number continues to climb. In the last 2 months, again, we have had three especially deadly mass shootings: at a grocery store; at a school; and most recently, at the 4th of July parade in my home State. We often see the devastating impacts of gun violence as it occurs on the news, but once the coverage dies down, communities are left to pick up the pieces and face the long-term outcomes.

And as we address the horrifying consequences of mass shootings, we must also confront the challenges of other forms of gun violence that don't make the news for decades. Working-class and minority neighborhoods have been subject to targeted economic dis-

crimination including redlining, and predatory lending practices. Many shootings take place in the same systemically-disadvantaged areas, like the South and West sides of Chicago, where there has been a lack of jobs and investment.

A question to our panelist, Mr. Brodeur. While limiting gun access, especially access to weapons of war, is a vital, necessary, and lifesaving first step, we must also consider other factors that contribute to mass shootings and gun violence, like disinvestment from communities, and access to mental health services. My question is, can you talk about the cycles of this investment in gun violence and how it keeps communities at risk?

Mr. BRODEUR. Sure. Thank you for the question. As I said, the first thing that should be noted is, if we are talking about violence in general, it is one thing. We are talking about mass shootings, and these are really random. It is incredibly hard to predict where the next mass shooting is going to be. I have tried. The FBI has tried. So many people have tried. It is really very hard to predict where it is going to happen. It can happen mostly in urban areas. But other than that, it is going to be incredibly hard to figure out where it is going to happen.

In terms of business cycles in general, could this economy potentially lead to more mass shootings if there is a recession? It could, but it is going to be very hard to try to prevent it because we don't know where it is going to happen. In terms of these perpetrators needing mental health support, 100 percent. The vast majority of them have a history of mental health illness that is documented, so it is not something that we learned is exposed, but that we knew. A doctor knew the kid, or the children, or the adolescent, young adult actually was seeing a psychiatrist, for instance. This happens quite a lot. So, this is one of the predictors for sure. Providing more healthcare to help the average young Americans who suffer with schizophrenia or mental health disease would be amazing just for the sake of their mental health, but also potentially preventing mass shootings.

When we think about what we can do to financially help communities that are struggling with crime—if I think about Buffalo and Mayor Brown, this community just suffered a lot, and they are going to need financial support. And the thing that I find extremely frustrating is if you look at mass shootings, which are random and just happen somewhere, the consequences are permanent. And I like to think horizontally when I think about a problem, and the first thing that comes to mind is natural disasters. Natural disasters just occur once. It is random. It is going to hit somewhere. Think of a hurricane, and when we look at the economic consequences of these disasters, they are usually not permanent. They are short term.

And one of the big differences between natural disasters and mass shootings is that with a mass shooting, there is no financial support for these communities. They need financial support after a mass shooting. This is obvious, and this might help to alleviate some of the economic consequences. Of course, some of these communities need help even before mass a shooting, but I am not going to lie, there is no way you can predict where the next mass shooting is going to be. And there are tons of communities that need

help, those who suffer most from violent crime. I would target these communities if we would have defunding. But in general, there is no way you can predict where it is going to happen next, unfortunately.

Mr. GARCIA OF ILLINOIS. Thank you so much. It looks like my time has expired, so I yield back to the Chair.

Chairman GREEN. The gentleman's time has expired. The gentlewoman from Michigan, Ms. Tlaib, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I really appreciate this hearing. And one of the things that is so hard for me, even the title of looking at the economic cost of gun violence, but I understand that we need to pay attention. Who is profiting off of this pain and this trauma that is really jeopardizing so many lives across our country and really just hurting so many families? These costs, as we all know, have been felt particularly among our children, specifically school-age children. We all know that education is by far the largest category of municipal bond issuance in our country as well. As mass shootings have increased, our education dollars have been increasingly funneled towards school security rather than investing in our teachers or our students.

And in 2021, Mr. Chairman, the so-called school security industry made $3.1 billion. As The American Prospect has written, the financial services industry makes money lending to school districts to install security upgrades, and those upgrades manifestly do little or nothing to prevent mass shootings, as we continue to see. And they make more money lending to companies that make AR-15s, a weapon of choice for mass murderers of children, the same companies.

Some banks like Citibank have previously refused to finance the gun industry, and I applaud them for this. However, in 2021, Texas enacted a law that blocks banks from doing business with State and local governments that discriminate against the gun industry. This has the largest municipal bond market in the country. In response, Citi stated in 2021 that it did not have a practice policy guidance or directive that discriminates against firearm entities or firearm trade associations.

Ms. Burd-Sharps, do you think that laws like the one enacted in Texas are intended to have negative effects, particularly in the municipal bond market? And what message is the Texas law sending to banks like Citibank that have taken steps to limit their exposure to the gun industry?

Ms. BURD-SHARPS. Thank you for your question. I would say that in the work that we have been doing, the message that is sending is that businesses can't take a position in terms of contributing to reducing these costs that I just spoke of today. And it is critical that institutions, that all of us not facilitate high-risk transactions, including, for instance, sales of assault weapons and weapons of war to young people, et cetera. And I say that working on gun violence prevention is a hard topic, but I think the hopeful news for me is that we do know research is increasingly pointing us in the direction of policies that do make a difference, and of practices of the business community, as well as of local people, that can reduce the kinds of injuries that are so costly to our society.

Ms. TLAIB. No, I think the responsibility that we are talking about in this committee, on the financial services industry—they do have a role here. And according to Everytown, the cost of gun violence nationally is $280 billion, when first responders, law enforcement, and criminal justice services respond to mass shootings. This results in enormous costs to taxpayers. The research estimates that Las Vegas, Nevada, for a mass shooting in 2017, resulted in $600 million in taxpayer dollars.

Mayor Brown, do you think it is fair that your community and your neighbors pay such a steep price while the gun companies profit from mass shootings? Do the gun companies have a role to play in making victims and survivors in communities like yours whole after mass shootings?

Mr. BROWN. Thank you for your question, Congresswoman. I don't think that it is fair that communities, like my community of Buffalo and other communities across the country that have suffered these mass shootings, have to bear the financial burden of those shootings. I think the gun companies, the gun manufacturers do have a role to play, and I think it is important for there to be liability on the part of gun manufacturers for these terrible crimes that continue to play themselves out across the country.

As Members of Congress have stated today, there have been over 340 mass shootings in this country, in this year alone. The financial consequences are devastating to communities, and I believe that gun manufacturers do have a role to play. They should suffer liability for these crimes that are being committed in our communities.

Ms. TLAIB. Thank you, and I yield back.

Chairman GREEN. The gentlewoman yields back. The gentlewoman from Iowa, Mrs. Axne, who is also the Vice Chair of our Subcommittee on Housing, Community Development, and Insurance, is now recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. AXNE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of our witnesses for being here. And, Mayor Brown, a sincere thank you to you, and my condolences to those in your community who have suffered so greatly. Thank you for being here with us.

Of course, I want to start by saying that mass shootings and gun violence have a lot more direct impacts that are much more tragic than the economic impacts are, and those will always be more important. But of course, we are on the Financial Services Committee, and we need to look at whatever impact these shootings are having on our communities, because it is important to stop them, which is why I have said for years on end that we need an assault weapons ban back in place.

Just this year, Iowans have seen 3 people die outside of a church in Ames. Very recently, 12 people were shot in April in Cedar Rapids, and a 15-year-old was killed and 2 others shot outside a high school in Des Moines, right in my district. That was just a few blocks from our State capital. And unfortunately, at a town hall a couple of weeks ago, one of those students at East High School called asking what Congress had done, and what Congress could do more so that we could fix this situation. And although I am quite impressed that a 15-year-old is paying attention to politics and getting involved at such a young age, I almost started tearing up be-

cause it broke my heart that a 15-year-old had to call their Congresswoman and say, what else can you do so I can feel safe in my family and my kids that I go to school with can feel safe. This is a tragedy of where we are at, so I am thinking about these kids.

And, Dr. Singh, I want to ask you, you have studied the long-term economic impacts of school shootings on the students at these schools. I know this isn't going to be good news for us to hear, but what can you tell me about what you have found?

Ms. SINGH. Looking specifically at the long-term economic outcomes, I will focus on some of my research along with some of the other academic papers on this issue where these papers show that after shootings, and this could be shootings where there are no fatalities, there is increased absenteeism. The students who are exposed are more likely to repeat a grade. When we look at the medium-term educational effects of the shootings, these students are less likely to go to college or less likely to complete college, and, of course, this would have longer-term impacts. And this paper finds longer-term impacts on earnings and the likelihood of being employed. So, exposed students are less likely to be employed, and their earnings are also lower at the ages of 24 to 26 years. There are long-term economic effects for these students who are exposed to gun violence in schools. Thank you.

Mrs. AXNE. And are there steps that we can take to help there?

Ms. SINGH. In one of my studies, we analyze the effect of the Safe Passage Program in Chicago, and the reason we were studying Chicago is, as most of us in this room know, the crime around schools is really high. What the City of Chicago did was they placed guards around schools, and these guards are civilians. They are not police officers. And they are placed for 2 to 3 hours in the morning, and 2 to 3 hours in the afternoon, so basically, during the arrival and dismissal times, and that helps reduce violent crime.

And the program was effective. The effects persisted for even 3 years after the program was implemented. It was cost-effective to do it because these are basically parents and others from the community who are doing this community monitoring. And the idea was that having more eyes on the street might help reduce crime basically, deter students from loitering around. They go to school more, and it also helped improve attendance. So, we not only see improvement in violent crime, but also that these students start going to school more often.

The obvious question is, what is really going on here, and why is this program effective? One of the conjectures that we come up with is because these are people from the community, they really know the students, and we find higher effects for the high school students. They go to school, and instead of committing a crime or getting involved in criminal activities, they are attending the classes. Thank you.

Mrs. AXNE. Thank you so much for that, and we just have a little bit of time here, but the impact of school shootings on property values, absolutely has an impact.

Mr. Brodeur, can you share what you found there? What is that impact on housing prices in areas where school shootings have happened?

Mr. BRODEUR. Housing prices decreased by about 2.5 percent usually, on average. Again, the effect is pretty much permanent. The effect seems to be larger in the streets or the localities close to the shooting, but the effect is also present for the rest of the county. Thank you.

Mrs. AXNE. Thank you.

Chairman GREEN. The gentlelady's time has expired. I now recognize myself for 5 minutes for questions.

Mr. Ingram, you referenced George Floyd. What that officer did to George Floyd was unconscionable, but you wouldn't paint all police officers with the same brush, would you?

Mr. INGRAM. Thank you for that question. Absolutely not.

Chairman GREEN. A simple yes or no will suffice for now. Would you?

Mr. INGRAM. No.

Chairman GREEN. Do you think that when one police officer commits an egregious offense, all officers ought to be considered to be bad officers?

Mr. INGRAM. No.

Chairman GREEN. How do you feel when you hear people doing that, just claiming that all officers are bad because one officer does something or maybe multiple officers? There have been many egregious circumstances, but how do you feel when people do that?

Mr. INGRAM. It is heartbreaking.

Chairman GREEN. Okay. Do you think that because one prosecutor releases someone or doesn't prosecute a case properly that you should paint all prosecutors with the same brush?

Mr. INGRAM. No.

Chairman GREEN. One judge makes a mistake or lets someone out and that person commits an offense, do you think you should paint all judges with the same brush, Mr. Ingram?

Mr. INGRAM. No.

Chairman GREEN. How do you feel when you hear people painting all judges with the same brush, all prosecutors with the same brush? The prosecutors are doing it. The liberal prosecutors are doing it. How do you feel when you hear that, Mr. Ingram?

Mr. INGRAM. I can only speak to what is happening, and—

Chairman GREEN. I am not asking you about what is happening. You don't think that all police officers are to be abused verbally, and I would assume that as the good-natured person you are, you would not want to see all judges painted with the same brush, would you?

Mr. INGRAM. Correct.

Chairman GREEN. Thank you. I appreciate you helping me to help my colleagues better understand that they shouldn't do that. Now, Mayor, I thank you again for being here. The business community has a role to play in this as well. What do you see as the role of the business community?

Mr. BROWN. The business community should invest equitably throughout the community. They should not exclude customers in certain parts of the community because that exacerbates poverty. It contributes to crime. It devalues certain areas of the community. In Buffalo, in the mass shooting that we experienced, the Tops Supermarket Company was the first company almost 20 years ago,

supermarket chain that made a commitment to invest in an urban area of the City of Buffalo, in East Buffalo, that previously had been a food desert. And the investment in that store that I and others fought and negotiated to bring to that community became a center of community. People came there not only to shop, but to meet and spend time with friends. And so, the crime that was committed there was a heinous act of racist violence.

Chairman GREEN. Let me intercede for just a moment. I only have 49 seconds or thereabouts. Do you think that the business community should take a public position as it relates to this violence, these mass shootings?

Mr. BROWN. Yes, I do.

Chairman GREEN. And, Mayor, you have a Buffalo Niagara Partnership (BNP) similar to a chamber of commerce, and I have a letter from them. They indicate that earlier this year, the BNP stepped out of the confines of our traditional advocacy priorities and brought together a coalition of several regional chambers of commerce across New York State to call on Congress to pass an assault weapons ban. This action followed the racist mass shooting at the Tops Supermarket in Buffalo on May 14, 2022. I am proud of what you have been able to accomplish with your chamber of commerce. Do you think that chambers of commerce across the country should take similar positions?

Mr. BROWN. I absolutely do.

Chairman GREEN. And I am concerned about the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. It seems to me that they ought to take a position as well.

Mr. BROWN. I agree with that.

Chairman GREEN. Now, in closing, let me just share this quickly. In Texas, at Robb Elementary, hundreds of police officers were there, and we know what happened. The video speaks for itself. I don't condemn all police officers, but I do condemn those who did not move in to save lives. My uncle was a deputy sheriff. I am where I am today because of a deputy sheriff. I don't condemn all police officers, but those who are wrong, I do.

I want to thank all of you for being here today, and I want to say that Ms. Garcia is going to be recognized, but if hundreds of police officers didn't take out that gunman, I don't think we should expect a teacher with a pistol to take on a gunman. Teachers ought to be allowed to teach, and we ought to have safety officers who do their jobs.

With that, Ms. Garcia, you are now recognized.

Ms. GARCIA OF TEXAS. Mr. Chairman, I ask for unanimous consent to enter in the record the report that I referenced, the Investigative Committee on the Robb Elementary School shooting made by the Texas House of Representatives.

Chairman GREEN. Without objection, it is so ordered.

And I will be introducing a letter from the Buffalo Niagara Partnership, without objection. Also, I introduce, without objection, the "Economic Cost of Gun Violence."

And the Chair would like to thank our witnesses for their testimony today.

The Chair notes that some Members may have additional questions for these witnesses, which they may wish to submit in writ-

ing. Without objection, the hearing record will remain open for 5 legislative days for Members to submit written questions to these witnesses and to place their responses in the record. Also, without objection, Members will have 5 legislative days to submit extraneous materials to the Chair for inclusion in the record.

This hearing is now adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 3:33 p.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

July 19, 2022

Thoughts and Prayers Are Not Enough: How Mass Shootings Harm Communities, Local Economies, and Economic Growth

Witness: Abel Brodeur [*]

July 19, 2022

Abstract

We investigate the economic consequences of mass shootings in the U.S. We find that mass shootings have negative effects on targeted counties' economies. Estimates using three different comparison groups yield similar results. Examining the mechanisms, we find that residents of targeted areas: (i) develop pessimistic views of financial and local business conditions; and (ii) are more likely to report poor mental health, which hinders usual activities such as work, suggesting that shootings lead to decreases in productivity. Further, we find that greater national media coverage of shootings exacerbates their local economic consequences.

[*]Brodeur, University of Ottawa, abrodeur@uottawa.ca. Most of what follows is a reproduction of my joint work entitled "The Economics of Mass Shootings" with Hasin Yousaf, 2019. IZA Discussion Papers 12728, Institute of Labor Economics (IZA).

1. Introduction

In the United States, gun violence imposes significant direct costs in its human toll (Cook and Ludwig (2000)), and indirectly affecting society as a whole (e.g., Lowe and Galea (2017)). Mass shootings are intense events of gun violence which, though they represent less than 1 percent of gun-related deaths, contribute disproportionately to public policy (Luca, Malhotra and Poliquin (2020)) and public health (Rossin-Slater et al. (2020)). From 2000 to 2015, there have been more than 200 mass shootings in the U.S. leading to more than 1,000 fatalities and thousands of injuries. Given that mass shootings are a common occurrence, it is crucial to identify the economic impacts of these tragedies. While a growing literature acknowledges the importance of mass shootings and analyzes its consequences on mental health (Lowe and Galea (2017) and Rossin-Slater et al. (2020)), electoral outcomes (Yousaf (2021)), student performance (Abouk and Adams (2013), Beland and Kim (2016) and Poutvaara and Ropponen (2018)), and gun laws (Donohue, Aneja and Weber (2019) and Luca, Malhotra and Poliquin (2020)), few studies have investigated whether mass shootings have significant economic consequences on targeted areas.[1]

In this testimony, we estimate the impacts of mass shootings on economic outcomes for the targeted counties. Mass shootings are plausibly sporadic acts of violence that are geographically scattered instead of repeatedly affecting one region. They are events with well-defined start and end dates, which helps us analyze their short-term and long-term effects. Mass shootings lead to low physical capital and human loss relative to other forms of violence, helping us to understand the non-mechanical impact of violence.

In terms of methodology, we employ a difference-in-differences (DiD) framework with staggered events. We begin by using all county-year observations to estimate the impact of mass shootings. Before estimating our results, we compare counties with and without mass shootings and find that those with mass shootings are more populated and have higher

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[1] To date, the only studies linking mass shootings to the economy analyze the effect of mass shootings on stock prices (e.g., Gopal and Greenwood (2017)). There is some anecdotal evidence that mass shootings have long-lasting consequences for the towns targeted (Rowhani-Rahbar, Zatzick and Rivara (2019)).

employment per capita, real earnings per capita, establishments per capita, and housing prices. This is not surprising as mass shootings tend to occur disproportionately in urban areas. However, we document that the trends in these variables are not systematically different between counties with and without mass shootings, strengthening the credibility of our empirical strategy.

We show that earnings per capita decrease by 2.4% after mass shootings relative to other counties. The estimated effects persist for more than three years after the shootings. We also find that earnings per employed worker decrease by 1.1%, suggesting that both the intensive (decrease in earnings per employed job) and extensive margins (decrease in employment per capita) contribute to the effect of mass shootings on earnings. We also provide evidence that mass shootings lead to a 1.3% decrease in employment in counties with mass shootings relative to other counties. We also do not document a significant impact of mass shootings on establishments per capita. Overall, our results show that mass shootings result in significant economic losses for local economies. The estimated effect of a 1.3% decrease in employment suggests that mass shootings decrease the number of jobs by about 466 in an average county (out of an average of 35,863 jobs).

It is difficult to claim that the effect estimated using all county observations reflects a causal effect of mass shootings due to the potential endogenous nature of violence (Blattman and Miguel (2010) and Pinotti (2015)). We further address this concern with our empirical strategy by using three alternative comparison groups. First, one may be concerned that counties with mass shootings are systematically different from other counties. Thus, we exploit the inherent randomness in the success or failure of mass shootings.[2] "Failed" mass shootings are defined as those in which the shooter opens fire in a public place intending to kill indiscriminately but "fails" to kill at least four individuals. This identification strategy is appealing since counties targeted by "successful" and "failed" mass shootings are balanced along a large number of socioeconomic characteristics pre-shooting. In the second sample,

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[2]This strategy is similar in methodology to Brodeur (2018) and Jones and Olken (2009), who compare the economic impact of successful relative to failed terrorist attacks and political assassinations.

we use the neighboring counties of ones with mass shootings as a comparison group. This comparison group is appealing since mass shootings are more likely in urban areas, and geographically close counties may thus represent a good comparison group. In the third sample, we use matched counties as a comparison group to overcome these differences in levels. We use lagged population, economic activity, crime controls, gun-related controls, and geographic controls to predict mass shootings. We match each mass shooting to the three closest neighbors based on the propensity score. In all three samples, we confirm our main results, adding credibility that the estimated effects reflect the causal impact of mass shootings on economic outcomes.

Next, we try to understand the channels through which mass shootings might affect local economies. We divide the channels into internal (i.e., direct effect on residents of targeted areas) and external (i.e., indirect effect on local areas through outsiders). We first investigate the internal mechanisms focusing on consumer sentiment and the health of the labor force. More precisely, we analyze how mass shootings impact personal finance, business conditions, consumption decisions, and expectations about future economic conditions. We find that respondents living in targeted counties are more likely to report that business conditions are worse now relative to a year ago, and they express greater pessimism about their future personal finance. These results show that consumers change their expectations about current business conditions and the future state of their personal finances due to mass shootings. We also explore whether mass shootings impact the economy through their effect on the (health of the) labor force. We find that the number of days respondents report having poor overall health increases in counties with mass shootings relative to other counties. The negative effect of mass shootings on health outcomes is driven by the deterioration of mental health. These results suggest that mass shootings increase the likelihood that poor health, especially poor mental health, makes the residents of targeted counties unable to engage in their usual activities such as work.

For the external mechanisms, we first examine the effect of mass shootings on housing prices. We find that housing prices decrease by 1.6% in counties with mass shootings relative

to other counties, showing that mass shootings are a negative shock to household wealth. We then explore whether the national media coverage of mass shootings might exacerbate their economic impact. Following Eisensee and Stromberg (2007), we exploit the variation generated by news pressure from other events on the national media coverage of mass shootings to study its role on economic outcomes. Specifically, we explore how the lack of national media attention due to natural disasters in the U.S. on the day of a mass shooting affects local economic activity. We first find that mass shootings that occur during a natural disaster receive significantly less national media coverage. We then show that mass shootings that garner greater media attention lead to a more significant reduction in targeted counties' employment and earnings. Our estimates suggest that one additional news story about the mass shooting in the national media leads to a 0.4% decrease in county employment. These results reveal that greater media coverage may make these counties less attractive to outsiders, worsening the impact of mass shootings on local economies.

Our study relates to the existing literature on the economics of hate crime, terrorism and violent crime (Dustmann, Fabbri and Preston (2011); Esteban, Morelli and Rohner (2015); Falk, Kuhn and Zweimüller (2011); Fryer and Levitt (2012); Krueger and Pischke (1997); Levitt and Venkatesh (2000); Lin (2008)). The literature has documented both positive and negative relationships between economic conditions and violent crime (Box (1987)). The scant literature in various disciplines finds little evidence that local area characteristics are related to the likelihood of mass shootings. See Muschert (2007) for a literature review and Duwe (2014) for a history of mass shootings in the U.S. Our results shed light on additional costs of gun violence by showing that notable gun violence events affect the economy and the labor force. Our back-of-the-envelope calculations suggest that from 2000 to 2013, mass shootings have led to 104, 850 fewer jobs in the affected counties relative to other counties.

Our paper is also directly related to a growing literature on the relationship between violence and media (Adena et al. (2015); Dahl and DellaVigna (2009); Durante and Zhuravskaya (2018); Jetter (2017); Yanagizawa-Drott (2014)). Jetter and Walker (2018) empirically analyze the relationship between media and mass shootings. The authors provide evidence that

the media coverage of mass shootings on ABC World News Tonight (2013–2016) encourages future mass shootings. We contribute to this literature by showing that national media coverage of tragedies such as mass shootings may exacerbate their negative effects on the economy.

The remainder of this testimony is structured as follows. In Section 2, we present a simple conceptual framework that details the potential mechanisms through which mass shootings may impact local economies. In Section 3, we describe the data sets and provide summary statistics. Section 4 illustrates the identification strategy, and Section 5 reports the baseline econometric evidence and the sensitivity analysis, respectively. Section 6 documents the channels through which mass shootings affect local economies. The final section concludes and presents policy implications.

2. Conceptual Framework

The effect of mass shootings on local economies is a priori ambiguous since many channels are at work. An established literature shows that regions exposed to conflict and violent crime tend to experience deteriorating labor market conditions (Abadie and Gardeazabal (2003); Blattman and Miguel (2010); Keefer and Loayza (2008)). Our context is somewhat different since mass shootings do not lead to the direct widespread destruction of human and physical capital. Furthermore, mass shootings typically do not occur in the same location, whereas terrorists and criminals often target the same areas repeatedly. Therefore, channels other than direct economic losses may likely explain our main findings.

Below, we provide a simple conceptual framework, splitting potential mechanisms into two categories: internal (i.e., how mass shootings directly impact residents) and external (i.e., how outsiders perceive locales hit by mass shootings).

In our empirical analysis, we first study whether mass shootings impact local economies through their direct effect on residents. Mass shootings are highly salient events, as recent

surveys suggest that being killed in a mass shooting is one of the top fears among the U.S. population (Bader (2016)). Thus, it is plausible that mass shootings may spur fear and uncertainty among residents, leading them to hold more pessimistic views of their current and future economic conditions (Bloom, Bond and Van Reenen (2007); Baker, Bloom and Davis (2016)). We test this channel using data on consumption decisions, current economic conditions, and future economic expectations of households.

A vast literature links violence (e.g., terror attacks and violent crime) to poor individual mental health conditions due to stress or fear (e.g., Metzl and MacLeish (2015)). Thus, it is likely that mass shootings may negatively affect residents' mental health. Consequently, declining mental health among workers in the labor force may affect the economy either by decreasing labor productivity or increasing absenteeism. We test this channel by using data on respondents' self-reported mental and physical health.[3]

We also investigate the role of external factors in the aftermath of mass shootings. For example, mass shootings may evoke significant behavioral responses from non-residents making the affected counties less desirable. An extensive literature documents how crime and domestic terrorism impact housing prices (see, for example, Ratcliffe and von Hinke Kessler Scholder (2015)). The lack of desirability of counties affected by mass shootings may manifest in the local housing prices.[4] Individuals living in targeted areas may be concerned about the resale value of their properties and potential buyers may be concerned about the areas' safety.

Individuals from outside the affected counties are likely to hear about mass shootings through the media. Of particular importance is the role of national media coverage, which provides exposure to large and diverse audiences around the nation. Analyzing national

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[3]A related channel through which mass shootings could affect well-being is the locus of control (Caliendo, Cobb-Clark and Uhlendorff (2015)). People may simply feel less in control of their destiny after a shooting, i.e., the locus of control shifts from internal to external. A growing empirical literature shows that having an internal locus of control is associated with labor market success (Cobb-Clark (2015)). Thus, a (temporary) shift from internal to external due to mass shootings may decrease labor market success. Unfortunately, we cannot test this channel due to the lack of available data.

[4]We, unfortunately, cannot test empirically whether mass shootings lead to a change in the inflow or outflow of investment due to a lack of information on the county-to-county investment flow.

media coverage is key as shootings that receive more national coverage may remain more salient and be retained longer in people's minds. Moreover, national media coverage of these events may change the national perception of safety within the affected counties. We explore how the national media coverage of mass shootings mediates their local economic impacts. Specifically, we test whether more extensive national media coverage of the shooting amplifies the incident's negative effect.

3. Data Sources

Our analysis combines economic outcomes from the U.S. Census Bureau with variation at the county level from data that we assembled and enriched with details related to mass shooting events. We first present the data on mass shootings and then data on economic variables. We then describe data sources employed to study the mechanisms driving the economic factors.

3.1 Mass Shootings

Throughout, we use the FBI definition of a mass shooting, i.e., four or more people, excluding the perpetrator(s) killed in a shooting incident (Krouse and Richardson (2015)). We compile the list of mass shootings using two data sources. Our primary data source is the Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR) provided by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2018). The SHR are detailed incident-based reports recorded after each homicide. The data is provided monthly by each local enforcement agency. It contains information on the homicide location, the number of people killed and injured, the weapon used, and the probable motive(s) for the reported homicide.[5] We use these reports to extract mass shootings

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[5]The FBI SHR, available to download from: https://www.icpsr.umich.edu/web/NACJD/series/57?q=Supplementary, includes direct information on the county of the incident. Specifically, variable V8 contains information on the county where the incident took place. In addition, the USA Today data contains the latitude and longitude of the incident. This limits any concern regarding the measurement issues associated with the location of shootings.

incidents as (i) homicide events with four or more fatalities, (ii) the weapon used for the homicide was a type of gun, and (iii) the probable motive for the homicide was unclear.[6] Since the exact event date is not reported in the data, we manually search for local (city) media coverage of mass shootings during the month in which the event appears to obtain the exact date of each shooting.[7]

Second, we complement the FBI SHR data set with the list of mass shootings compiled by USA Today (2019), which analyzed local news reports, unreported local court documents, and law enforcement agency materials to compile a list of mass shootings not reported in the FBI SHR. This data contains information on the exact date and location of the shooting, the number of victims, and the type of shooting (school, public, family, other). Overall, our data contains 225 mass shootings in 173 counties from 2000 to 2013.

3.2 Employment, Earnings, and Other Data

Our primary data source for economic outcomes is County Business Patterns (CBP), an annual series maintained by the U.S. Census Bureau (United States Census Bureau (2019)). CBP contains county-level information on employment, the number of establishments, and annual payroll during the week of March 12. It covers the vast majority of NAICS industries but excludes establishments engaged in rail transportation and public administration, private households, organizations with government employees, and a few additional industries. Data for single-establishment companies are retrieved from different Census Bureau surveys, while data for multi-establishment enterprises come from the Company Organization Survey. We

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[6]This excludes gang-related shootings from our sample.

[7]As with any large-scale administrative data that does not count averages across geographic regions but instead records detailed event-level information, it is bound to have some limitations. These limitations are discussed in detail in Fox and Swatt (2009), who state that: "Like other elements of the UCR [Uniform Crime Reporting] program, SHR data are submitted voluntarily by law enforcement agencies nationwide. Because of the voluntary nature of the initiative, agencies may fail to provide SHR information to the FBI without penalty or consequence. As an extreme example, in 1976, New York City provided SHR data for only the first 6 months of the year. In addition, Washington DC failed to submit SHR data for several years. Unit missingness (homicides not reflected in the SHR data) is a problem that plagues information from agencies of all sizes." (p. 53). However, the authors note that: "Overall, the SHR file is approximately 90% complete." (p. 53)

use data from 1995 to 2018 to ensure that we have sufficient amount (at least six years) of data, both pre- and post-mass shootings. Moreover, since the economic variables are recorded during the week of March 12, we merge mass shootings in January and February to the same year's economic data and the remaining mass shootings to the subsequent year's economic data.

To estimate the impact of mass shootings on different industries and show that the results are robust to alternate data sources, we rely on data from the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019). The QCEW program provides the county-level employment and wage data of establishments that report to Unemployment Insurance (UI) programs. The data reported by employers cover more than 95 percent of civilian jobs.[8] In addition to employment and earnings data, the QCEW reports employment and earnings from private and government jobs and different industries. Both the CBP and QCEW measure the number of jobs in a county on a place of work basis. Thus, our empirical analysis investigates the effect of mass shootings on employment in targeted counties rather than where workers live.

We use the Federal Housing Finance Agency (FHFA) data to measure housing prices at the county level. FHFA creates single-family housing price indices by county since 1975, which are built by using repeat-sales and refinancing for houses with mortgages that have been purchased or securitized by Fannie Mae or Freddie Mac (Bogin, Doerner and Larson (2019)).

To measure the impact of mass shootings on health outcomes, we use data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). The BRFSS–representative of each state's non-institutionalized adult population–is a telephone survey coordinated by state health departments in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).[9]

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[8]Jobs not covered by the QCEW (excluded from UI coverage) include self-employed workers, most agricultural workers on small farms, military personnel, elected officials in most states, rail transportation workers, and those employed in a few additional industries.

[9]More information on this survey is available on the CDC's website (http://www.cdc.gov/brfss). Information on the county of residence is available until 2012.

The survey asks respondents about socioeconomic and health-related information. We rely on the following question to measure the effect of mass shootings on physical, mental, and overall health: "During the past 30 days, for about how many days did poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self-care, work, or recreation?", "Now thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good?", and "Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?". We exclude respondents older than 65 and those who report being disabled, homemakers, retired, or students.

To measure the impact of mass shootings on consumer sentiment, we use the Michigan Surveys of Consumers (MSC) to study changes in consumption or business decisions and expectations for the future. MSC is a nationally representative monthly telephone survey of more than 500 consumers. Its main objective is to measure temporal fluctuations in consumer confidence.

We collect data on the media coverage of mass shootings from the Vanderbilt Television News Archive. We perform an exhaustive manual search to collect data on media coverage of mass shootings. We read the detailed description of each news story about a city during the weeks around the mass shootings. For each mass shooting, we construct whether it was covered in the national news, and record the number of different news stories, and the number of minutes dedicated to the shooting during the week it took place. Following DellaVigna and La Ferrara (2010) to account for scale effects, we also count the number of minutes of coverage and the total number of news stories related to the city (excluding those related to the shooting) where it happened. In total, we have data on media coverage for 188 mass shootings.

To establish the causal impact of media coverage, we collect data on natural disasters in the United States. Following Eisensee and Stromberg (2007), we assemble this data from the Emergency Disaster Database (EM-DAT) as provided by the Centre for Research on

the Epidemiology of Disasters (CRED). The data contains information on the start and end dates of each disaster, its location, and the disaster type. We restrict our attention to natural disasters during our sample period, i.e., 2000 to 2015. This leaves us with 310 natural disasters, of which 72% are storms, 26% are floods, and 2% are earthquakes. On average, a natural disaster leads to 18 deaths, affects more than $68,000$ individuals, and leads to an estimated economic loss of more than \$1.6 million. Overall, 48 mass shootings occur during a natural disaster. Of note, we exclude natural disasters that occur in the same state to avoid the violation of exclusion restriction.[10]

3.3 Summary Statistics

We restrict data to six years around mass shootings for counties with mass shootings and observations for other counties. Overall, we have 70,823 county-year observations from 1995 to 2018, 2% of which are in counties after a mass shooting. Table 1 provides summary statistics. The mean of our dependent variables, the natural logarithm of employment per capita, real earnings per capita, and establishments per capita, is -142, 54, and -381, respectively.

Figure 1 shows the location of different mass shootings. We see that mass shootings are (i) spread across the United States and (ii) more likely to occur in more populated places.

4. Empirical Strategy

In this section, we first discuss our main empirical strategy and illustrate differences between counties with and without mass shootings. We then discuss three alternate samples to ensure that our reported results reflect the causal impact of mass shootings on economic outcomes.

Our empirical strategy relies on employing difference-in-differences (DiD) with staggered

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[10]This results in six natural disasters not being included in our sample.

events. As a natural starting point, we use all county-year observations to estimate the impact of mass shootings. However, all counties are less likely to be comparable to counties with mass shootings. Thus, using a sample of counties that is more comparable to those with mass shootings provides more credible identification. To address this concern, we replicate the results of the main empirical strategy using three alternate samples.

To estimate the average impact of mass shootings, we estimate the following empirical models:

$$Y_{ct} = \gamma_c + \rho_t + \beta \text{Post-Treatment}_{ct} + \varepsilon_{ct}, \tag{1}$$

where Y_{ct} is an economic outcome of interest in county c in the year t. Since counties with and without mass shootings have different population levels, we use economic variables per capita (i.e., normalized by total population). Post-Treatment$_{c,t}$ is a dummy variable equal to one if county c had a mass shooting in year t and zero otherwise. We include county-year observations up to six years around a shooting for counties with a shooting, and all observations for other counties.

In all the estimations, we include county fixed effects to absorb differences in the economic variables, in levels, across counties. County fixed effects account for time-invariant factors such as location and local legislation. In addition, we include year fixed effects to absorb business cycle fluctuations. In augmented specifications, we further include interaction between regional dummies and the year dummies, and interaction between U.S. Census Division dummies and the year dummies. We cluster the standard errors at the county level to allow for correlation in county observations across time.

Our identification of β relies on comparing changes in trends in the economic variables in counties with mass shootings to other counties. For β to reflect the causal impact of mass shootings, we must assume that absent the mass shooting economic outcomes would have evolved similarly in counties with and without mass shootings. To examine this assumption, and provide evidence in favor of causal identification, we compare differences in levels and trends in population and economic variables in counties with mass shootings with those

without shootings. We include five years before a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting and all observations for other counties. Table 1 (Column 1) shows that counties with mass shootings are more populated and have higher employment per capita, real earnings per capita, establishments per capita, and housing price. This is not surprising as mass shootings tend to occur disproportionately in urban areas. However, in Column 2, we see the trends in these variables do not differ between counties with and without mass shootings. Only 2 out of 13 variables are statistically significant at the 10% level. This result strengthens the credibility of our empirical strategy.

An important remaining concern with using all county-year observations for estimation is that counties without mass shootings may not be a valid comparison group for counties with mass shootings. If this is the case, our estimates above would be biased. To establish the credibility of our empirical strategy, we use more comparable control groups to estimate the impact of mass shootings. Specifically, we use three different control groups to estimate the impact of mass shootings: counties with "failed" mass shootings, neighboring counties, and matched counties.[11] We discuss why these counties are more likely to be comparable to counties with mass shootings below.

To overcome the concern that counties with mass shootings are systematically different from other counties, we use "failed" mass shootings from the FBI Active Shooter Incidents reports as a comparison group in the first sample. The FBI defines an incident as an active shooting if "an individual is actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a populated area." These incidents provide a valid counter-factual because the shooter opens fire in a public place intending to kill indiscriminately. This strategy relies on inherent randomness in the success or failure of mass shootings.[12] We use these reports to characterize active shooting incidents with less than four deaths as "failed" mass shootings. Altogether,

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[11]See Appendix Table A1 for differences in levels and trends between counties with a mass shooting and the alternative control groups.

[12]Failed mass shootings may end due to four reasons: (1) law enforcement intervention, (2) citizen(s) restrained or subdued the perpetrator, (3) suicide before law enforcement arrived, and (4) the perpetrator fled the scene before law enforcement arrived. Approximately 34%, 15%, and 15% of failed mass shootings ended because the perpetrator committed suicide before law enforcement arrived, citizen(s) subdued the perpetrator until law enforcement arrived, or the perpetrator fled the scene, respectively.

there are 108 failed mass shootings in 91 counties from 2000 to 2013. Altogether, 239 counties are included in this sample.

One key feature of mass shootings is that they are more likely to happen in urban areas. Geographically close counties to those affected by mass shootings may thus represent a fitting comparison group for counties with mass shootings. Hence, in the second sample, we use neighboring counties as a comparison group, using the county adjacency files to record them. In total, 901 counties are included in this sample. One potential issue with this second comparison group is spillover effects. We return to this potential issue when describing our results.

As a third comparison group, we rely on matched counties. The rationale for using this comparison group is that counties with mass shootings may be systematically different due to the levels of economic variables. We use lagged population, economic outcomes (employment per capita, real earnings per capita, and establishments per capita), crime controls (violent and property crime), gun-related controls (homicides and suicides by gun), and geographic controls (indicator equal to one if the county is a state capitol, a coastal county, a large transport hub, or a medium transport hub) to predict mass shootings. This strategy ensures that counties with and without mass shootings are similar according to several observables, including previous economic outcomes. We match each mass shooting to its three closest neighbors based on propensity score (excluding the counties with a mass shooting). Altogether, there are 503 counties included in this sample.

Figure 1 shows the location of "failed" mass shootings and matched mass shootings. Their locations seem to be geographically close to the counties with mass shootings, which is important to ensure that they represent valid comparison groups.

Finally, to study the dynamic effect of mass shootings, we estimate a fully dynamic difference-in-differences estimation by including leads and lags of the Post-Treatment vari-

able. Specifically, we estimate the following:

$$Y_{ct} = \gamma_c + \rho_t + \sum_{\tau=-6, \tau \neq -1}^{\tau=6} \xi \text{Post-Treatment}_{c, t-\tau} + \varepsilon_{ct}, \qquad (2)$$

where Y_{ct} is an economic outcome of interest in county c and year t. Post-Treatment$_{c,t-\tau}$ is a dummy equal to one for year τ before ($\tau > 0$) or after ($\tau < 0$) there was a mass shooting. We include county-year observations six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting, and all observations for other counties. The year before the shooting is the omitted category.

5. Main Results

In this section, we first present results from the average impact of mass shootings. We then discuss the results from the event-study analysis.

5.1 Average Effect of mass shootings on economic variables

In this subsection, we estimate a DiD using all U.S. counties in the analysis. The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment," which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. Table 2 shows the estimates. In Columns 1, 4, and 7, we include only county and year fixed effects. In Columns 2, 5, and 8, we add Census region × year fixed effects. In Columns 3, 6, and 9, we include Census divisions × year fixed effects.

Column 1 (Table 2) shows that employment per capita decreases by 2.6% after a mass shooting relative to other counties. In Column 4, we see that earnings per capita decrease by about 4.8% after a mass shooting relative to other counties. In Column 7, we see that the number of business establishments decreases by approximately 0.8% (statistically significant at the 10% level) after a mass shooting relative to other counties. We see that the magnitude of the estimates are unchanged if we include Census region × year fixed effects in Columns 2 and 5, but the estimate becomes statistically insignificant for the number of establishments

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in Column 8.

Our preferred specification includes Census divisions × year fixed effects (Columns 3, 6, and 9). In Column 3, we see that employment decreases by about 1.3% after mass shootings relative to other counties. The estimate is statistically significant at the 1% level. In Column 6, we see that earnings per capita significantly decrease by 2.4% after a mass shooting relative to other counties. In contrast, we do not find evidence that mass shootings significantly impact the number of establishments per capita.

To show that our results are not sensitive to the choice of comparison group, Table 3 shows the estimates in different samples. In Panel A, our sample consists of counties with mass shootings and "failed" mass shootings. Columns 1–3 show that mass shootings result in a 1.1% to 1.3% decrease in employment per capita in counties with mass shootings relative to "failed" mass shootings. In Columns 4 to 6, we see that mass shootings result in a 2.0% to 2.4% decrease in real earnings per capita in counties with mass shootings relative to "failed" mass shootings. In Columns 7 to 9, we do not see a change in the number of establishments per capita in counties with mass shootings relative to "failed" mass shootings.[13]

In Panel B, our estimation sample consists of counties with mass shootings and their neighboring counties. We find that mass shootings result in a 0.9% to 1.1% decrease in employment per capita and a 1.6% to 2.1% decrease in real earnings per capita in counties with mass shootings relative to neighboring counties. In Columns 7 to 9, we do not see a change in the establishment per capita in counties with mass shootings relative to neighboring counties. Of note, it is possible that neighboring counties' employment and earnings are also negatively affected by the shootings. This may explain why our point estimates are slightly smaller in this sample compared to the estimates obtained using other comparison groups.

Finally, in Panel C, our sample consists of counties with mass shootings and counties

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[13]In Columns 1 to 6, we see that the coefficient on "Post-"Failed" Treatment" is consistently positive and half the size of the "Post-Treatment" coefficient. However, the coefficient is statistically insignificant at the 10% significance level, with t-values ranging between 0.76 to 1.30, suggesting a null effect.

matched based on lagged population, economic, crime, gun-related, and geographic variables. In Columns 1 to 3, we see that mass shootings result in a 1.0% to 1.4% decrease in employment per capita and a 1.9% to 2.4% decrease in real earnings per capita in counties with mass shootings relative to matched counties. As before, our estimates are small and insignificant for the number of establishments per capita.

Together, these results show that mass shootings result in significant economic losses for local economies. The estimated effect of 1.3% presented in Table 2 suggests that mass shootings decrease the number of jobs by about 466 in an average county (which has 35,863 jobs). Our back-of-the-envelope calculation suggests that mass shootings eliminated roughly 104,850 jobs in the United States from 2000 to 2013.

We benchmark these estimates to the impact of domestic terrorism and natural disasters, drawing upon Brodeur (2018), who analyzes the impact of terror attacks (e.g., radical environmental, hate, and religious groups) in the U.S. on employment and earnings. He finds that terror attacks decrease targeted counties' employment and earnings by approximately 2% in the years following the attack. Similarly, Groen, Kutzbach and Polivka (2020) find that hurricanes Katrina and Rita reduced earnings by about 3% in the year after the disaster. Our results indicate that the impact of mass shootings on earnings is comparable, albeit slightly smaller in magnitude, to terror attacks and natural disasters. In contrast to natural disasters, mass shootings result in a small direct economic loss (e.g., capital and infrastructure loss). In Section 6, we shed light on the potential mechanisms that may explain why we find an impact of mass shootings on local economies.

Next, we delve deeper into the effect of mass shootings on employment, earnings, and establishments to understand which part of the economy is more heavily affected by these events. Appendix Table A2 shows the effect of mass shootings on different economic outcomes. Since we show that employment per capita decreases, it is natural that earnings per capita would also decrease. Thus, in Column 1, we explore whether mass shootings result in a change in earnings per employed worker and find that it decreases by 1.1%. The effect is 45% as large as the effect of mass shootings on earnings per capita. This finding suggests

that both the intensive margin (decrease in earnings per employed job) and extensive margin (decrease in employment per capita) contribute to the effect of mass shootings on earnings. We also analyze whether the decrease in jobs originates from firms shutting down or reducing their workforce. In Column 2, we find that employment per establishment decreases by 1.3%, suggesting that the entire effect of the decrease in employment per capita is explained by a decrease in employment per establishment.

5.2 Dynamic Effect of mass shootings on economic variables

Next, we study the dynamic effect of mass shootings by estimating Equation 2. We include county-year observations six years around a mass shooting for counties with mass shootings and observations for other counties.[14] The year before the shooting is the omitted category. Figures 2a, 2b and 2c illustrate the effect of mass shootings on employment per capita, earnings per capita, and establishments per capita for each period around a mass shooting, respectively. (Appendix Table A4 shows the point estimates.)

The estimated coefficients for employment are consistently negative throughout the post-shooting period and statistically significant from the second year following the shooting onward. The effect does not fade over time but remains between -1.1% to -1.4% three to five years after the event. For earnings per capita, we find that the effect of mass shootings on earnings is immediate: real earnings decrease by about 1% in the year of the mass shooting. The effect of mass shootings on real earnings increases from the second period to the remaining periods, remaining between -2.1% to -3.4% three to five years after the event. Lastly, we find that mass shootings do not significantly affect establishments, even in the first couple of years after shootings.

Notably, the figures illustrate that counties with and without mass shootings had similar employment and earnings per capita trends before the event. The estimates range from -0.2

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[14]We do not use other samples to estimate Equation 2, as the problem of under-identification is particularly exacerbated in the estimation of fully dynamic DiD with zero or only a few never treated units.

to 0.4 for employment and are statistically insignificant at the 10% significance level (the absolute t-values range between 0.33 and 0.74). Similarly, the estimates for earnings range from -0.3 to 0.1 and are all statistically insignificant at the 10% significance level.

Together, these results show that mass shootings result in a long-term decrease in earnings per capita. In contrast, we do not see a change in establishments per capita due to mass shootings.

5.3 Robustness Checks

In this subsection, we test the robustness of our main findings. One important concern about the two-way fixed effect estimator raised by the recent econometric literature on staggered DiD is that the estimated parameter of interest (β in our case) in the presence of staggered treatment timing can be biased and may be of opposite sign relative to the average treatment effect. We provide evidence that our results are not sensitive to these concerns by following the methods suggested by de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille (2020).[15] We find that only 14 out of 1,340 (1%) treatment effects receive negative weights.[16] Nevertheless, in Appendix Table A5 we estimate our two-way fixed effects using the methods proposed by de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille (2020). The table shows the immediate impact of mass shootings. We see that mass shootings result in an immediate decline in employment and earnings that is similar to the results obtained in our main analysis.

In addition, we perform the decomposition of treatment effects estimated by difference-in-differences into the magnitude of the effect and weight using the methods proposed by Goodman-Bacon (2021). Appendix Table A6 shows the results. We see that the DiD estimator heavily relies on the comparison between treated versus never treated counties.

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[15] We also perform the interaction-weighted estimator proposed by Sun and Abraham (2021) by allowing for the treatment effect to differ for each county. We find that the average treatment effect on employment, earnings, and establishments is -2.7, -4.9, and -0.9, respectively, and the median treatment effect on employment, earnings, and establishments is -2.5, -5.0, and -1.8, respectively.

[16] As a comparison, 253 out of 1397 (18%), 15 out of 1340 (1.1%), and 41 out of 1340 (3%) treatment effects receive negative weights in our sample of counties with mass shootings and "failed" mass shootings, the sample of neighboring counties, and the sample of matched counties, respectively.

We further see that all comparisons–earlier-treated versus later-control, later-treated versus earlier-control, treated versus never treated, and treated versus already treated–yield a negative treatment effect. These results suggest that our results are robust to various comparison groups in Goodman-Bacon (2021)'s decomposition.

Another potential concern may be that our results stem from differences in mass shootings and economic activity across states. Of particular concern is that mass shootings might be endogenous to state gun policy laws. In Appendix Table A7 and A8, we include state dummies interacted with the year dummies to control for state-specific trends in mass shootings and economic activity. Our main results remain unchanged, though of a slightly smaller magnitude. In addition, one may be concerned that counties with multiple mass shootings may drive the main findings. In Appendix Table A9, we find that the main results are unchanged if we omit counties with multiple mass shootings from our estimation.

Next, one may be concerned that a particular data source of mass shootings may drive the main findings. In Appendix Table A10, we separately estimate the effect of mass shootings based on whether it is recorded in FBI SHR or USA Today.[17] We find that the effects of mass shootings recorded in USA Today on employment and earnings are larger in comparison to the effect of mass shootings recorded in FBI SHR. This makes sense as the USA Today records mass shootings more widely covered in the media that may be missing from the FBI SHR data source.

Next, in Appendix Table A11, we vary the definition of mass shootings based on fatalities. In Panel A, we consider mass shootings as shootings with two or more deaths (2,579 events). We see that the effects are much smaller in magnitude and statistically insignificant for employment and earnings. Surprisingly, the effect on establishments per capita is statistically significant. In Panel B, we consider mass shootings as shootings with three or more deaths (754 events). We see that the effects are relatively smaller than those obtained in the main analysis, but statistically significant. In Panels C and D, we define mass shootings as

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[17]Thirty-five mass shootings originate from the USA Today data source. The remaining shootings are from FBI SHR.

shootings with five or more and six or more deaths (90 and 52 events), respectively. We see that the estimates are comparable to the ones obtained in the main analysis.

Another plausible concern is that mass shootings may be related to the characteristics of the event or the efficiency of local law enforcement agencies. This concern is particularly relevant for determining the success or failure of mass shootings. In Appendix Table A12 we use the sample of counties with mass shootings and "failed" mass shootings and include shooter characteristics such as shooter's age, whether the shooter was male, and the weapon used to perform the shooting. We see that the estimates are similar to the ones obtained in the main analysis, showing that shooter characteristics do not explain away the main results.[18]

6. Potential Mechanisms

In this section, we examine and document potential mechanisms through which mass shootings may affect local economies. Based on our conceptual framework, we characterize these mechanisms as internal and external.

6.1 Internal Mechanisms: Consumer Expectations and Labor Productivity

In this section, we analyze the internal mechanisms that may explain the effect of mass shootings on economic outcomes. We first examine the effect of mass shootings on consumer sentiment. In Table 4, Columns 1 to 4 (Panel A), we analyze how mass shootings impact personal finance, business conditions, consumption decisions, and expectations about future economic conditions. In all estimations, we include individual controls (age, age squared, gender, education categories, and marital status) and weight observations by sample weights.

In Column 1, we do not see that respondents in counties with mass shootings are more

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[18]We also find that the impact of mass shootings on economic outcomes does not vary depending on the shooter's age, whether the shooter was male, or the weapon used to perform the shooting.

likely to say that their personal finances are worse now relative to one year ago. The coefficient is economically small and statistically insignificant at the 10% level. In Column 2, we document that respondents are 4.6 percentage points (mean of the dependent variable is 56.9) more likely to report that business conditions are worse now relative to a year ago. In Column 3, we find that respondents are not more likely to cite that it is a bad time to buy major household items relative to one year ago. The coefficient is economically small and statistically insignificant at the 10% level. Last, in Column 4, we document that mass shootings lead respondents to become pessimistic about their future personal finances. We see that respondents are 2.1 percentage points (mean of the dependent variable is 13.5) more likely to report that their personal finances would worsen one year from now.

These results suggest that mass shootings are negative shocks to household wealth and are directly responsible for household economic decision-making, as they negatively affect current business conditions and expectations about future personal finances.

Next, we explore whether mass shootings impact the economy by affecting the mental health of the labor force. Specifically, we use the BRFSS to measure whether mass shootings lead to negative health outcomes. In Panel B, Columns 1 to 3 of Table 4 present the estimates. In all estimations, we include individual controls (age, age squared, gender, education categories, and marital status) and weight observations by sample weights. We restrict our sample to two years around mass shootings for counties with mass shootings and all observations for other counties.[19]

In Column 1, we see that the number of days respondents report having poor overall health increases, on average, by 0.36 days (mean of the dependent variable is 5.6) in counties with mass shootings relative to other counties. In Column 2, we see that respondents are not more likely to report having poor physical health in counties with mass shootings relative to other counties. The coefficient is both economically small in magnitude and statistically insignificant at the 10% level. Finally, in Column 3, we see that the number

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[19]We chose to restrict the sample to two years around mass shootings to make our estimates comparable to other studies (e.g., Rossin-Slater et al. (2020)).

of days respondents report having poor mental health increases, on average, by 0.30 days (mean of the dependent variable is 3.2) in counties with mass shootings relative to other counties.

To sum up, the effect of mass shootings on health is driven by mental health deterioration among the labor force. This finding is consistent with Rossin-Slater et al. (2020), who find a large, persistent negative impact of school shootings on mental health among youths. These results suggest that mass shootings increase the likelihood that poor health, especially poor mental health, makes residents of targeted counties unable to engage in their usual activities such as work. It is thus plausible that shootings may decrease labor productivity or lead to an increase in absenteeism due to poor health.

6.2 External Mechanisms: Housing Prices, Migration, and Media Coverage

We now turn to external mechanisms. In Appendix Table A13, we investigate whether mass shootings impact migration patterns. We find that mass shootings do not result in a change in population or migration into affected counties, showing that the composition and total labor force remain unchanged.[20] In the aftermath of a disaster, long-term earnings have been shown to increase due to reduced labor supply (e.g., Groen, Kutzbach and Polivka (2020)). Our null result on population and migration suggests that earnings do not recover in counties with mass shootings, perhaps due to the lack of a reduction in labor supply.

We then analyze the effect of mass shootings on housing prices. Housing represents the greatest component of household wealth, with, on average, over 60% of household wealth held in home equity (Banks, Blundell and Smith (2004)). Table 4, Column 4 (Panel B), shows the estimates. We see that housing prices decrease by approximately 1.6% in counties with mass shootings relative to other counties. According to hedonic pricing models of housing, this result of the decreased valuation of housing in affected areas, in conjunction

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[20]Unfortunately, our data does contain direct information on the population that migrated from the affected counties.

with no change in population in the affected counties, suggests that the demand for housing decreases in affected areas.

We now test whether media coverage exacerbates the negative economic outcomes of mass shootings. It is difficult to answer this question because the national media coverage of mass shootings is likely to be endogenous. For instance, mass shootings that occur close to the county population center may be more likely to receive higher national media coverage. Simultaneously, these mass shootings likely have a stronger effect on the county's economic outcomes. This may lead to a downward bias in the OLS estimates.

To establish the causal impact of media coverage of mass shootings on the economic outcome, we use news pressure on the day of the shooting. We also include the fact that natural disasters on the day of a mass shooting may lead to less extensive coverage crowd out the news on the shooting entirely. Conceptually, our approach is similar to the news pressure first employed by Eisensee and Stromberg (2007).

Specifically, we implement an instrumental variable strategy where we predict the news coverage of mass shootings in a first stage by whether it occurs during the time of a natural disaster. We use the exact dates of the shootings and natural disasters to characterize whether a mass shooting occurs during a natural disaster. We then omit natural disasters that occur within the same state on the day of a mass shooting to reduce concerns about violation of exclusion restrictions.[21] Overall, 42 mass shootings occur during a natural disaster. We then use this predicted media coverage of each shooting in the second stage to estimate the impact of media coverage of mass shootings on economic outcomes. We focus only on (successful) mass shootings in the year of the shooting for our analysis. We estimate the following specification:

$$
\begin{cases}
Media_{cst} = \gamma_s + \rho_{dt} + \pi ND_{cst} + \text{MS-deaths}_{cst}\lambda + u_{cst}, \\
\Delta Y_{cst} = \gamma_s + \rho_{dt} + \beta \widehat{Media}_{cst} + X'_{cst}\gamma + \varepsilon_{cst},
\end{cases} \tag{3}
$$

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[21]This impacts six mass shootings that occur during a natural disaster in the same state.

where $Media_{cst}$ measures the media coverage of the mass shooting in the national media (either the number of news stories or the total duration of news stories). ND_{cst} equals one if there is a natural disaster in the U.S. on the exact date of the shooting and zero otherwise.[22] ΔY_{cst} is the change in the economic variable of interest from the previous year. $\widehat{Media_{cst}}$ is the predicted media coverage from the first stage. MS-deaths controls for the total number of individuals killed in the mass shooting .

In the specification, we use first-difference in economic outcome to absorb county-specific time-invariant factors.[23] Our strategy is only able to capture the contemporaneous effect of the media coverage of mass shootings on economic outcomes.[24]

Appendix Table A14 shows estimates of the first stage. We obtain a Montiel-Pueger F Statistic (Olea and Pflueger (2013)) of 9.4 and 7.4 in Columns 1 and 2, respectively, showing that our instrument is relevant. We see that mass shootings that occur the same day as a natural disaster attract 3.4 fewer stories (mean of dependent variable 6.6) and receive 11.7 fewer minutes of news coverage (mean of dependent variable 24.38) relative to mass shootings that occur at other times.

Table 5 shows the results from the OLS estimation (Columns 1, 3, and 5) and the second stage (Columns 2, 4, and 6). In Panel A, the main independent variable is the number of news stories in the national media. The OLS estimate in Column 1 shows that the estimate of media coverage is economically small and statistically insignificant. However, the IV estimate in Column 2 shows that national media coverage of mass shootings leads to a decrease in employment. One additional news story on a mass shooting in the national

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[22]The instrument using the number of deaths due to a natural disaster (instead of the indicator variable for natural disaster) does not yield a strong first stage, thus resulting in a weak instrument.

[23]This specification is comparable to a fixed-effects specification with two periods in which the first period is before the shooting and the second period is the year of the shooting.

[24]One concern about the validity of the instrument could be that there is an overlap in the timing of mass shootings and natural disaster. In particular, we would be concerned if the counties with a mass shooting had a natural disaster in the same or the preceding year. This would violate the exclusion restriction because natural disasters will directly affect economic outcomes. We investigate the location and timing of natural disasters and find that none of the counties with a mass shooting were directly affected by the natural disaster. Moreover, we omit natural disasters that occur within the same state on the day of a mass shooting to reduce concerns about violation of exclusion restrictions.

media leads to a 0.44% decrease in employment per capita. In Column 3, we see that the OLS estimate of the effect of media coverage on real earnings is statistically insignificant. The IV estimate in Column 4, however, shows that national media coverage of mass shootings leads to a decrease in earnings. For example, one additional news story on a mass shooting in the national media leads to a 0.82% decrease in earnings per capita. In Columns 5 and 6, we see that media coverage does not impact establishments per capita.

In Panel B, the main independent variable is the duration of news stories on mass shootings (in minutes) in the national media. The OLS estimate in Column 1 shows that the estimate of media coverage is economically small and statistically insignificant. The IV estimate in Column 2, however, shows that the duration of the national media coverage of mass shootings leads to a decrease in employment. One additional minute of a news story on a mass shooting in the national media leads to a 0.13% decrease in employment per capita. In Column 3, we see that the OLS estimate of the effect of the duration of media coverage on real earnings is statistically insignificant. However, the IV estimate in Column 4 shows that the duration of national media coverage of mass shootings leads to a decrease in earnings. One additional news story on a mass shooting in the national media leads to a 0.24% decrease in earnings per capita. In Columns 5 and 6, we see that media coverage does not impact establishments per capita. Together, these results reveal that greater national media coverage of mass shootings exacerbates their local economic impact.

7. Conclusion

We provided detailed accounts of the economic consequences of mass shootings. We found that, on average, mass shootings have an economically significant negative effect on local labor markets. Our estimates suggest that mass shootings reduce earnings by about 2%. The effect persists for more than three years after the shootings. We showed that earnings per employed worker decrease by 1.1%, suggesting that both intensive and extensive margins contribute to the effect of mass shootings on earnings. We then provided evidence that mass

shootings decrease employment by about 1%. We found that the economic consequences of mass shootings are larger for services, manufacturing, and goods producing industries, and entirely driven by the private sector. We did not find an impact of mass shootings on establishments per capita.

We then investigate plausible channels, characterizing them into internal and external mechanisms. In the internal mechanism, we found that mass shootings are a negative shock to household wealth, expectations about current business conditions, and expectations for future personal finances–variables that are directly responsible for household economic decision-making. Moreover, we found that mass shootings lead to poor mental health making the residents of targeted counties unable to engage in usual activities such as work, suggesting that shootings may decrease labor productivity or lead to an increase in absenteeism due to poor health. In the external mechanisms, we found that the national media coverage of mass shootings exacerbates the negative economic consequences for targeted areas. Greater national media coverage of mass shootings may make these places more salient in the nation and worsen their local impact.

Taken as a whole, our results show that mass shootings are major local labor market shocks. Our results show that mass shootings operate through internal mechanisms such as a decrease in household wealth, pessimistic expectations about the current and future state of the economy, and the deterioration of residents' mental health. These results suggest that public policy efforts in the aftermath of mass shootings should be aimed at managing expectations about future economic conditions so that individuals feel confident about the economy. Moreover, public policy efforts should aim to identify the groups most vulnerable to the negative mental health consequences of mass shootings and provide them with low-cost access to relevant medical treatment. Finally, national media outlets should avoid sensationalizing the coverage of mass shootings, which would help avoid making these areas less attractive to individuals and businesses located elsewhere.

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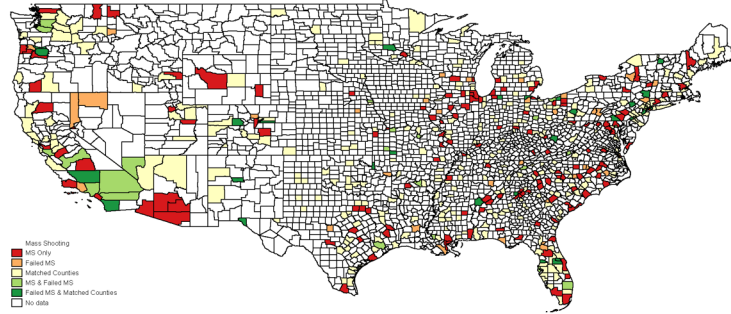
Notes: The Figure shows the location of mass shootings. Red colored counties are counties with mass shootings only. Orange colored counties are counties with failed mass shootings only. Yellow colored counties are counties that represent matched mass shootings. Light green colored counties are counties with both mass shootings and failed mass shootings. Finally, dark green colored counties are counties with failed mass shootings and matched mass shootings. There is no overlap between matched mass shootings and mass shootings by construction.

Figure 1: Location of Mass Shootings

(a) Employment

(b) Earnings

(c) Establishments
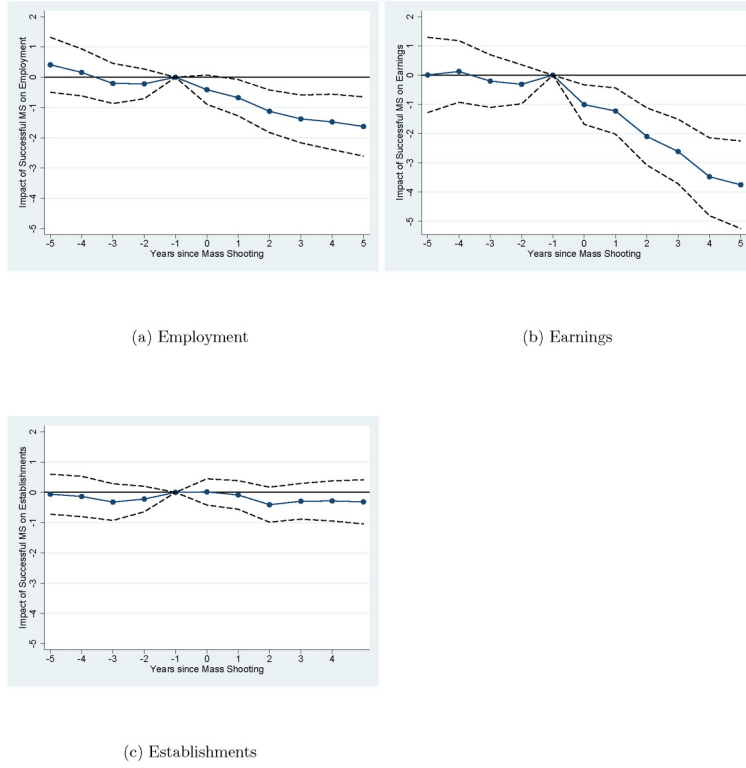
Figure 2: Event Study

The Figure shows the result from an OLS estimation of Equation 2. The figure plots the β coefficients. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (a), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (b), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (c). The independent variable is equal to one for each period around a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county, year and U.S. Divisions by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting.

Table 1: Summary Statistics and Differences in Levels and Trends

| | Difference between counties in: | | |
	Levels	Trends	Mean (SD)
Log Population	2.102***	0.0004	10.142
	(0.0432)	(0.0006)	(1.360)
100*Log Employment per capita	5.962***	-0.310	-142.151
	(1.488)	(0.261)	(45.43)
100*Log Real Earnings per capita	3.295*	-0.529	53.513
	(1.930)	(0.355)	(60.75)
100*Log Establishments per capita	3.009**	-0.0544	-381.308
	(1.204)	(0.139)	(35.15)
100*Log Earnings per job	-2.466***	-0.140	195.812
	(0.757)	(0.240)	(24.26)
100*Log Jobs per Establishments	3.455***	-0.273	239.048
	(1.267)	(0.268)	(38.61)
100*Log House Price Index	-2.659***	1.327***	477.300
	(0.727)	(0.176)	(21.50)
Percentage Population > 25 years	-0.114	0.003	67.042
	(0.189)	(0.01)	(4.571)
Percentage Population - White	-0.864	0.000	80.981
	(0.699)	(0.03)	(18.301)
Percentage Population - Blacks	0.0473***	0.002	8.373
	(0.540)	(0.007)	(13.974)
Percentage Population Hispanics	-2.12***	0.02**	7.230
	(0.459)	(0.01)	(11.925)
Percentage Population < HS degree	1.30***	0.007	53.209
	(0.288)	(0.02)	(7.956)
Percentage Population with College degree	-1.42***	0.005	11.960
	(0.180)	(0.01)	(5.022)

Notes: The Table shows the difference in levels and trends in economic variables for counties with and without mass shootings. The dependent variables in Column 1 are the level of economic variables over the five years prior to a mass shooting outlined in the first column. The dependent variables in Column 2 are the change in economic variables over the five years prior to a mass shooting outlined in the first column. Column 3 shows the mean and standard deviation (in parentheses). In all estimates, except first row, we control for population. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and up to five years before the mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table 2: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	100*Log Employment p.c.			100*Log Real Earnings p.c.			100*Log Establishments p.c.		
Post-Treatment	-2.658***	-2.603***	-1.348***	-4.857***	-4.866***	-2.447***	-0.873*	-0.826	-0.0767
	(0.533)	(0.538)	(0.523)	(0.771)	(0.779)	(0.746)	(0.519)	(0.503)	(0.492)
Observations	70,823	70,823	70,823	70,823	70,823	70,823	70,823	70,823	70,823
R-squared	0.934	0.936	0.940	0.926	0.927	0.934	0.962	0.963	0.965
County FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Region × Year FE		YES			YES			YES	
Division × Year FE			YES			YES			YES

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Columns 1–3), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Columns 4–6), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Columns 7–9). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county and year fixed effects. Columns 2, 5, and 8 additionally include U.S. Census Regions by year fixed effects. Columns 3, 6, and 9 alternately include U.S. Census Divisions by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table 3: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments Using Alternative Control Groups

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	100*Log Employment p.c.			100*Log Real Earnings p.c.			100*Log Establishments p.c.		
Panel A	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings and "Failed" Mass Shootings								
Post-Treatment	-1.321**	-1.232*	-1.088*	-2.002*	-2.337**	-1.990**	-0.073	0.176	0.206
	(0.656)	(0.648)	(0.631)	(1.048)	(1.022)	(0.948)	(0.655)	(0.602)	(0.602)
Post-"Failed" Treatment	0.594	0.514	0.589	0.687	1.024	1.156	-0.525	-0.733	-0.517
	(0.563)	(0.599)	(0.587)	(0.895)	(0.924)	(0.853)	(0.519)	(0.552)	(0.573)
Observations	3,257	3,257	3,253	3,257	3,257	3,253	3,257	3,257	3,253
R-squared	0.985	0.986	0.987	0.987	0.987	0.988	0.979	0.981	0.983
Panel B	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings and Neighboring Counties								
Post-Treatment	-1.145**	-1.168**	-0.930*	-2.022**	-2.173***	-1.624**	-0.081	-0.035	0.127
	(0.573)	(0.571)	(0.548)	(0.822)	(0.822)	(0.777)	(0.532)	(0.514)	(0.502)
Observations	19,280	19,280	19,280	19,280	19,280	19,280	19,280	19,280	19,280
R-squared	0.952	0.953	0.955	0.952	0.953	0.956	0.963	0.964	0.966
Panel C	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings and Matched Counties								
Post-Treatment	-1.453**	-1.379**	-1.056*	-2.362***	-2.398***	-1.891**	-0.450	-0.320	-0.272
	(0.584)	(0.588)	(0.572)	(0.855)	(0.863)	(0.816)	(0.530)	(0.515)	(0.514)
Observations	6,743	6,743	6,742	6,743	6,743	6,742	6,743	6,743	6,742
R-squared	0.976	0.976	0.978	0.979	0.980	0.981	0.983	0.984	0.985
County FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Region × Year FE		YES			YES			YES	
Division × Year FE			YES			YES			YES

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Columns 1–3), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Columns 4–6), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Columns 7–9). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county and year fixed effects. Columns 2, 5, and 8 additionally include U.S. Census Regions by year fixed effects. Columns 3, 6, and 9 alternately include U.S. Census Divisions by year fixed effects. Panel A uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and "failed" mass shooting. Panel B uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and its neighboring counties. Panel C uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and matched counties based on lagged value of economic variables (employment, earnings, and establishments), census, gun, crime, geographic, and time controls. The data for "failed" mass shooting is based on FBI Active Shooter Incidents. Neighboring counties are defined using the NBER County Adjacency File. In Panel A, the sample is six years around a mass shooting or "failed" mass shooting. In Panel B, the sample is six years around a mass shooting and all county-year observations for its neighboring counties. In Panel C, the sample is six years around a mass shooting or matched mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table 4: Impact of Mass Shootings on Consumer Sentiments, Health, and House Prices

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel A	Consumer Sentiment and Household Finance			
Variables	Personal Finance Worse Now	Business Conditions Worse Now	Bad Time Buy HH Items	Personal Finance Worse Future
Post-Treatment	-1.435	4.697***	0.267	2.106**
	(1.809)	(1.680)	(1.351)	(0.944)
Observations	57,654	57,589	57,654	57,640
R-squared	0.150	0.231	0.146	0.125
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Panel B	Health and House Prices			
Variables	Poor Overall Health	Poor Physical Health	Poor Mental Health	Log. House Price Index
Post-Treatment	0.356**	0.058	0.298***	-1.623**
	(0.151)	(0.0823)	(0.150)	(0.769)
Observations	149,469	149,469	149,469	53,761
R-squared	0.034	0.023	0.032	0.879

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. In Panel A, the dependent variables in Columns 1 to 4 are based on answers to the question: "We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you are better off or worse off financially than you were a year ago?", "Would you say that at the present time business conditions are better or worse than they were a year ago?", "About the big things people buy for their homes–such as furniture, a refrigerator, stove, television, and things like that. Generally speaking, do you think now is a good or a bad time for people to buy major household items?", and "Now looking ahead–do you think that a year from now you will be better off financially, or worse off, or just about the same as now?". The variables are equal to one if respondents report "Worse" (Columns 1, 2, and 4) or "Bad" (Column 3) and zero otherwise. In Panel B, the dependent variables in Column 1 to 3 are based on answers to the question: "During the past 30 days, for about how many days did poor physical or mental health keep you from doing your usual activities, such as self-care, work, or recreation?", "Now thinking about your physical health, which includes physical illness and injury, for how many days during the past 30 days was your physical health not good?", and "Now thinking about your mental health, which includes stress, depression, and problems with emotions, for how many days during the past 30 days was your mental health not good?" The dependent variable in Panel B, Column 4 is 100 times the natural logarithm of the House Price Index. The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county and year fixed effects. Estimates include twenty-four months of observations around a mass shooting in Panel A (all columns) and Panel B (columns 1 to 3) for counties with a mass shooting and all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting. Panel B, Column 4 uses data from the Federal Reserve Bank of St. Louis. The time period is 2000–2015. Panel A, Columns 1 to 4 use the survey data from the Michigan Survey of Consumers. The time period is 2000–2012. Individual controls include age, age squared, gender, four education dummies and four marital status dummies. Household head sampling weights are used. Household head sampling weights are used. Panel B, Columns 1 to 3 use the survey data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. The time period is 2000–2012. Individual controls include age, age squared, gender, four education dummies and five marital status dummies. Individual sampling weights are used. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table 5: Impact of Media Coverage of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
	100*Log Emp p.c.		100*Log Earnings p.c.		100*Log Estab. p.c.	
Panel A	Media measure: Number of news stories on Mass Shooting					
Media Coverage	-0.022	-0.446**	-0.032	-0.817**	-0.015	-0.078
	(0.049)	(0.211)	(0.081)	(0.397)	(0.033)	(0.073)
ln(City News Stories)	1.110	0.149	2.666	0.884	-0.404	-0.548
	(1.200)	(1.234)	(1.715)	(1.749)	(1.287)	(0.874)
R-squared	0.742	0.618	0.672	0.503	0.736	0.731
Montiel-Pflueger F Stat	–	9.378	–	9.378	–	9.378
Panel B	Media measure: Number of minutes on Mass Shooting					
Media Coverage	0.006	-0.131**	0.006	-0.241**	0.011	-0.023
	(0.021)	(0.064)	(0.029)	(0.120)	(0.015)	(0.022)
ln(City News Stories)	1.163	1.131	2.740	2.683	-0.368	-0.376
	(1.174)	(1.162)	(1.716)	(1.733)	(1.264)	(0.907)
R-squared	0.742	0.553	0.672	0.431	0.738	0.716
Montiel-Pflueger F Stat	–	7.361	–	7.361	–	7.361
Estimation	OLS	IV	OLS	IV	OLS	IV
State FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Division × Year FE	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Observations	188	188	188	188	188	188

Notes: The table shows results from an OLS and IV estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Columns 1–2), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Columns 3–4), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Columns 5–6). The main independent variables are the number of news stories that the mass shooting received (Panel A), and the total number of minutes of news coverage that the mass shooting received (Panel B). Columns 1, 3, and 5 show results obtained using OLS, while Columns 2, 4, and 6 show results obtained using IV estimation. Media coverage is instrumented with a dummy variable equal to one if there was a natural disaster in the U.S. (not in the same state) on the exact date of the shooting and zero otherwise. Montiel-Pflueger F Statistic are reported below R-squared. The variable "ln(city news stories)" is the natural logarithm of the number of news stories about the city where shooting takes place. The sample is restricted to counties with a successful mass shooting. Only county-year observation in the year of the shooting are included. News coverage data is collected from the Vanderbilt Television News Archive. Natural disasters data is collected from the Emergency Disaster Database (EM-DAT). The time period is 2000–2015. The standard errors are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Appendix

Table A1: Comparing Trends for Counties with Mass Shootings to Alternative Control Groups

Change in:	MS vs Failed MS	MS vs Neighbors	MS vs Matched
Log Population	0.00171**	0.00165**	0.00167***
	(0.000816)	(0.000659)	(0.000606)
100*Log Employment per capita	-0.142	-0.286	-0.173
	(0.245)	(0.216)	(0.195)
100*Log Real Earnings per capita	-0.0449	-0.498*	-0.232
	(0.322)	(0.288)	(0.253)
100*Log Establishments per capita	-0.00696	-0.0423	0.122
	(0.132)	(0.122)	(0.0942)
100*Log Earnings per job	0.292	-0.0246	0.129
	(0.244)	(0.190)	(0.166)
100*Log Jobs per Establishments	-0.140	-0.270	-0.312
	(0.240)	(0.210)	(0.192)
100*Log House Price Index	0.784**	1.682***	1.836***
	(0.377)	(0.190)	(0.230)
Percentage Population > 25 years	0.000330***	-0.000311***	-3.14e-05
	(9.05e-05)	(8.65e-05)	(0.000109)
Percentage Population - White	0.00156***	-0.00276***	-0.000840***
	(0.000549)	(0.000261)	(0.000324)
Percentage Population - Blacks	-2.60e-05	0.000208**	0.000109
	(0.000119)	(8.16e-05)	(7.04e-05)
Percentage Population Hispanics	-1.47e-05	0.000867***	0.000211*
	(0.000155)	(7.90e-05)	(0.000117)
Percentage Population < HS degree	-6.51e-05	-0.000159	-6.42e-05
	(0.000148)	(0.000155)	(0.000139)
Percentage Population with College degree	0.000320***	4.36e-05	9.87e-05
	(8.65e-05)	(8.92e-05)	(6.97e-05)

Notes: The Table shows the difference in trends (past five years) in economic variables for counties with mass shootings in comparison to alternative control groups. Column 1 uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and "failed" mass shooting. Column 2 uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and its neighboring counties. Column 3 uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and matched counties based on lagged value of economic variables (employment, earnings, and establishments), census, gun, crime, geographic, and time controls. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A2: Impact of Mass Shootings on Different Economic Outcomes

Variables	(1) Earnings per Job	(2) Jobs per Firm
Post-Treatment	-1.143**	-1.333***
	(0.447)	(0.507)
Observations	70,823	70,823
R-squared	0.881	0.927

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Column 1) and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of employment to establishments (Column 2) respectively. The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county, year and U.S. Census Division by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A3: Impact of Mass Shootings on Different Industries

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	100*Log Employment p.c. in Industry:			
	Private	Federal	Education	Other
Post-Treatment	-1.442***	1.727	0.657	0.320
	(0.553)	(1.061)	(0.799)	(1.169)
Observations	29,813	29,813	29,813	29,813
R-squared	0.970	0.978	0.962	0.920

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of employment to population in private, federal, education, and other industries in Columns 1 to 4, respectively. The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county, year and U.S. Census Division by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 2000 to 2015. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A4: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: Event Study

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Treatment t-5	0.410	0.006	-0.061
	(0.554)	(0.784)	(0.403)
Treatment t-4	0.159	0.126	-0.136
	(0.473)	(0.642)	(0.407)
Treatment t-3	-0.206	-0.203	-0.321
	(0.404)	(0.549)	(0.369)
Treatment t-2	-0.219	-0.313	-0.221
	(0.298)	(0.407)	(0.256)
Treatment t	-0.411	-1.007**	0.014
	(0.295)	(0.412)	(0.264)
Treatment t+1	-0.677*	-1.226**	-0.086
	(0.365)	(0.481)	(0.288)
Treatment t+2	-1.126***	-2.097***	-0.408
	(0.429)	(0.596)	(0.353)
Treatment t+3	-1.377***	-2.611***	-0.295
	(0.481)	(0.673)	(0.360)
Treatment t+4	-1.476***	-3.474***	-0.284
	(0.558)	(0.812)	(0.404)
Observations	70,823	70,823	70,823
R-squared	0.940	0.934	0.965

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 2. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Column 1), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Column 2), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Column 3). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county, year, and U.S. Census Divisions by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A5: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: Two-Way FE Estimator

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Post-Treatment	-0.456*	-1.203***	-0.291
	(0.235)	(0.364)	(0.192)
N	41,062	41,062	41,062
Switchers	170	170	170

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1 using methods for Difference-in-Difference design with multiple groups and periods with heterogeneous treatment effects proposed by de Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille (2020). The coefficients reflect the immediate impact of mass shootings on each variable. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Column 1), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Column 2), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Column 3). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county and year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are bootstrapped using 1,000 replications. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A6: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: Goodman-Bacon Decomposition

Sample	All observations			
Variable	Weights	Jobs	Earnings	Establishments
Earlier T vs. Later C	0.008	0.584	0.464	0.498
Later T vs. Earlier C	0.009	-1.979	-2.312	-0.127
T vs. Never treated	0.982	-3.771	-6.814	-1.506
T vs. Already treated	0.001	1.299	-4.317	1.239

Notes: The Table shows results from decomposition of difference-in-difference estimator into treatment effect magnitude and weight each treatment effect receives using method proposed by Goodman-Bacon (2021). For details refer to Goodman-Bacon (2021).

Table A7: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: State Trends

	(1)	(2)	(3)
Variables	100*Log Employment p.c.	100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	100*Log Establishments p.c.
Post-Treatment	-0.852*	-1.720***	0.161
	(0.503)	(0.713)	(0.483)
Observations	70,808	70,808	70,808
R-squared	0.944	0.939	0.968
County FE	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES
State × Year FE	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Column 1), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Column 2), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Column 3). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county, year, and state by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A8: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments in Different Samples: State Trends

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Panel A	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings and "Failed" Mass Shootings		
Post-Treatment	-1.218*	-2.147**	0.0199
	(0.680)	(1.022)	(0.695)
Post-"Failed" Treatment	0.389	1.160	-0.615
	(0.611)	(0.966)	(0.653)
Observations	2,985	2,985	2,985
R-squared	0.990	0.992	0.987
Panel B	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings and Neighboring Counties		
Post-Treatment	-0.949*	-1.464**	0.001
	(0.539)	(0.718)	(0.493)
Observations	19,243	19,243	19,243
R-squared	0.958	0.960	0.970
Panel B	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings and "Matched" Counties		
Post-Treatment	-0.570	-1.402**	-0.300
	(0.543)	(0.758)	(0.439)
Observations	6,501	6,501	6,501
R-squared	0.977	0.981	0.980
County FE	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES
State × Year FE	YES	YES	YES

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Column 1), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Column 2), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Column 3). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county, year, and state by year fixed effects. Panel A uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and "failed" mass shooting. Panel B uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and its neighboring counties. Panel C uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and matched counties based on lagged value of economic variables (employment, earnings, and establishments), census, gun, crime, geographic, and time controls. The data for "failed" mass shooting is based on FBI Active Shooter Incidents. The data for neighboring counties is based on NBER County Adjacency File. In Panel A, the sample is six years around a mass shooting or "failed" mass shooting. In Panel B, the sample is six years around a mass shooting and all county-year observations for its neighboring counties. In Panel C, the sample is six years around a mass shooting or matched mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A9: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: Dropping Counties with Multiple Events

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	100*Log Employment p.c.			100*Log Real Earnings p.c.			100*Log Establishments p.c.		
Post-Treatment	-2.653***	-2.519***	-1.342**	-4.933***	-4.796***	-2.562***	-1.156**	-1.074**	-0.431
	(0.561)	(0.553)	(0.552)	(0.838)	(0.834)	(0.832)	(0.558)	(0.531)	(0.530)
Observations	70,218	70,218	70,218	70,218	70,218	70,218	70,218	70,218	70,218
R-squared	0.934	0.935	0.939	0.924	0.925	0.933	0.962	0.963	0.965
County FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Region × Year FE		YES			YES			YES	
Division × Year FE			YES			YES			YES

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The sample uses counties with at most one mass shooting. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Columns 1–3), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Columns 4–6), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Columns 7–9). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county and year fixed effects. Columns 2, 5, and 8 additionally include U.S. Census Regions by year fixed effects. Columns 3, 6, and 9 alternately include U.S. Census Divisions by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A10: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: Source of Mass Shooting

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
Variables	100*Log Employment p.c.			100*Log Real Earnings p.c.			100*Log Establishments p.c.		
Panel A	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings in FBI SHR								
Post-Treatment	-2.456***	-2.372***	-1.004*	-4.634***	-4.661***	-2.021**	-0.889	-0.825	0.0142
	(0.602)	(0.613)	(0.577)	(0.875)	(0.890)	(0.834)	(0.591)	(0.576)	(0.559)
Observations	70,360	70,360	70,360	70,360	70,360	70,360	70,360	70,360	70,360
R-squared	0.934	0.935	0.940	0.925	0.926	0.933	0.962	0.963	0.965
Panel B	Sample: Counties with Mass Shootings in USA Today								
Post-Treatment	-4.345***	-5.225***	-4.574***	-6.812***	-7.469***	-6.229***	-0.514	-1.192	-0.853
	(0.923)	(0.823)	(1.078)	(1.611)	(1.420)	(1.764)	(1.174)	(1.102)	(1.026)
Observations	69,076	69,076	69,076	69,076	69,076	69,076	69,076	69,076	69,076
R-squared	0.933	0.934	0.939	0.923	0.924	0.932	0.962	0.963	0.965
County FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Year FE	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Region × Year FE		YES			YES			YES	
Division × Year FE			YES			YES			YES

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. In Panel A, the mass shooting are recorded using FBI SHR and in Panel B, the mass shooting are recorded using USA Today. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Columns 1–3), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Columns 4–6), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Columns 7–9). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county and year fixed effects. Columns 2, 5, and 8 additionally include U.S. Census Regions by year fixed effects. Columns 3, 6, and 9 alternately include U.S. Census Divisions by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 1995 to 2018. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. See Table 1 for variable description. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A11: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: Definition of Mass Shooting

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Panel A	Mass Shooting Definition: Two or More Deaths		
Post-Treatment	-0.434	-1.161	-0.913***
	(0.375)	(0.921)	(0.237)
Observations	65,241	65,241	65,241
R-squared	0.943	0.937	0.966

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Panel B	Mass Shooting Definition: Three or More Deaths		
Post-Treatment	-1.167***	-2.002***	-0.583*
	(0.440)	(0.625)	(0.312)
Observations	68,846	68,846	68,846
R-squared	0.940	0.934	0.966

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Panel C	Mass Shooting Definition: Five or More Deaths		
Post-Treatment	-1.441**	-2.128**	-0.793
	(0.637)	(0.911)	(0.563)
Observations	69,419	69,419	69,419
R-squared	0.939	0.932	0.965

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Panel D	Mass Shooting Definition: Six or More Deaths		
Post-Treatment	-1.355**	-1.674	-1.215*
	(0.688)	(1.083)	(0.727)
Observations	69,024	69,024	69,024
R-squared	0.939	0.932	0.965

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Column 1), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Column 2), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Column 3). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. In Panel A, mass shooting is defined as an event with three or more deaths. In Panel B, mass shooting is defined as an event with two or more deaths. In Panel C, mass shooting is defined as an event with five or more deaths. In Panel D, mass shooting is defined as an event with six or more deaths. All estimates include county, year and U.S. Census Division by year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A12: Impact of Mass Shootings on Employment, Earnings, and Establishments: Including Shooter Characteristics

Variables	(1) 100*Log Employment p.c.	(2) 100*Log Real Earnings p.c.	(3) 100*Log Establishments p.c.
Post-Treatment	-1.059*	-1.952**	0.200
	(0.630)	(0.939)	(0.602)
Observations	3,253	3,253	3,253
R-squared	0.987	0.989	0.983

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. The estimation uses the sample of counties with a mass shooting and "failed" mass shooting. The dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of jobs to population (Column 1), 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of total real earnings (2005 dollars) to population (Column 2), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of business establishments to population (Column 3). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include shooting controls for shooter characteristics: shooter's age, whether shooter was male, and weapon used for shooting. All estimates include county, year and U.S. Census Division by year fixed effects. The sample uses six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting and "failed" mass shooting. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A13: Impact of Mass Shootings on Population and Migration

Panel A	(1) Population	(2) Pop. 15-65	(3) Pop. <15	(4) Pop. >65
Post-Treatment	0.138	0.464	0.096	-0.787
	(0.358)	(0.329)	(0.508)	(0.627)
Observations	50,564	50,564	50,564	50,564
R-squared	0.999	0.999	0.998	0.997

Panel B	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
			Moved From Outside:	
	Same House	County	State	Country
Post-Treatment	0.036	2.625	2.415	-3.448
	(0.172)	(1.657)	(1.630)	(3.209)
Observations	49,674	49,642	49,573	46,648
R-squared	0.864	0.823	0.804	0.737

Notes: The Table shows results from an OLS estimation of Equation 1. In Panel A, the dependent variables are 100 times the natural logarithm of population (Column 1), 100 times the natural logarithm of population between age of 15 and 65 years (Column 2), 100 times the natural logarithm of population of age less than 15 years (Column 3), and 100 times the natural logarithm of population of age more than 65 years (Column 4). In Panel B, the dependent variables are the ratio of households living in the same house to total population (Column 1), and 100 times the natural logarithm of the ratio of households moved from different county, state or country (Columns 2 to 4). The main independent variable is "Post-Treatment" which is equal to one after a mass shooting and zero otherwise. All estimates include county and year fixed effects. The sample uses all county-year observations for counties without a mass shooting and six years around a mass shooting for counties with a mass shooting. The estimates use yearly county level data from 2000 to 2015. Standard errors, shown in parentheses, are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

Table A14: Impact of Media Coverage: First Stage

| | Media Coverage: | |
	Stories	Minutes
Natural Disaster	-3.452**	-11.705**
	(1.536)	(5.426)
ln(City News Stories)	-2.432	-0.780
	(2.012)	(7.306)
Shooting Victims	-0.324	-1.181
	(0.238)	(1.076)
Observations	188	188
R-Squared	0.994	0.982
F-Stat	9.378	7.361

Notes: The Table shows estimates of the first stage (Equation 3). The sample is restricted to counties with successful mass shootings. Only county-year observation in the year of the shooting are included. The dependent variables are the number of news stories in Column 1, and the total duration of news coverage in Column 2. "Natural Disaster" is a dummy variable equal to one if there was a natural disaster in the U.S. on the exact date of the shooting and zero otherwise. The variable "ln(City News Stories)" is the natural logarithm of the number of news stories about the city where shooting takes place. The variable "Shooting Victims" counts the number of individuals (not including the shooter(s)) killed in the shooting. News coverage data is collected from the Vanderbilt Television News Archive. Natural disasters data is collected from the Emergency Disaster Database (EM-DAT). The time period is 2000–2015. The standard errors are clustered at the county level. * indicates significance at 10% significance level, ** indicates significance at 5% significance level, while *** indicates significance at 1% significance level.

TESTIMONY OF MAYOR BYRON W. BROWN
CITY OF BUFFALO, NEW YORK
HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Chairman Green, Ranking Member Emmer, and Members of the House Financial Services Committee, I am honored to be here today to discuss the harmful impact of mass shootings on communities, local economies, and economic growth.

On Saturday May 14th 2022, the unthinkable happened in Buffalo, New York. Our family members, friends and neighbors where simply going about their business, grocery shopping when without warning, they were interrupted by deadly gunfire. An outsider opened fire and killed 10 innocent people and injured three others. It was a moment that changed our community forever. 52 days after the devastating shooting, we reopened the Tops Supermarket. However, nothing we do will ever repair the heartache for the families who lost their loved ones, and who continue to suffer. But we will always stand united with them. In the City of Good Neighbors, we are a loving and resilient community, a community that will always remember. We will never forget.

This horrific tragedy highlighted many issues that have impacted our community and black and brown communities nationwide. Across our country we have seen over a century of underfunding by the federal government in black and brown neighborhoods. This has led to unacceptable increases in gun violence, segregation, crime, poor health outcomes, and generational poverty. These factors made Buffalo a target for the May 14 shooter.

Every mass shooting has a significant economic impact. However, the mass shooting in Buffalo was different. It was an act of domestic terrorism fueled by racism and white supremacy. This

was perceived to be not only and attack on Black Buffalo, but an attack on Black America. In just the two weeks after the shooting, City Departments spent over $500,000 of unbudgeted dollars on overtime and other related services. That amount has continued to significantly increase as City government continues to play a vital role in our community's healing process and public safety needs.

Gun violence has a lasting and negative impact on survivors and experiencing these events in childhood has a lifelong impact on the psychological well-being and labor market participation of those involved. The May 14 shooting in Buffalo will impact an entire generation of children. This event has the potential to harm Buffalo's already economically disadvantaged black community. It may drive growing gaps in cognitive and non-cognitive skills, accelerate a cycle that leads to low socioeconomic mobility and further grow inequality. We must do whatever we can to combat this and provide the East Buffalo community with the funding for services such as counseling, educational enrichment, and lost wages, as well as additional supports to ensure an equitable starting point in life.

According to a 2017 study by the Urban Institute - A Neighborhood-Level Analysis of the Economic Impact of Gun Violence, surges in gun violence can significantly reduce the growth of new retail and service businesses and slow home value appreciation. Higher levels of neighborhood gun violence can be associated with fewer retail and service establishments and fewer new jobs.

A 2021 Brookings Institute Study found that the best way to address place-based drivers of violence is with investments in the place's economic health, built environment conditions, social environment, and civic infrastructure. To combat that, my administration has taken an aggressive approach in developing programs for small businesses, workforce training, economic development and infrastructure investment in the areas that have seen this historic disinvestment. In East Buffalo, and in partnership with County, State, and Federal governments, we are bolstering our prioritization of funding improvements to infrastructure in streets, sidewalks, water, sewer, parks, community centers, and affordable housing.

I worked to open the Tops Supermarket when I was a city council member to help my community have access to fresh foods. In the aftermath of the shooting, my administration supported agencies to provide fresh and cooked food, facilitated food donations through FeedMore and World Central Kitchen, and partnered with ridesharing services to offer free rides for residents of the 14208 and 14209 zip codes who needed to access a grocery store while the market was closed. Thankfully, we worked with Tops to reopen the grocery store on July 15th and continue to provide East Buffalo with a high-quality grocery store that provides healthy options for the community.

We know there are still many needs to be addressed and the City of Buffalo remains committed to identifying and addressing these issues especially in East Buffalo. As we continue to mourn and heal from this tragedy, we will keep each other lifted in prayer. We must never forget this tragic event as we move forward and work towards a more peaceful and equitable society.

I applaud President Biden and the bipartisan group of members of Congress for supporting the Safer Communities Act. While, this law will save lives, it doesn't go far enough. I urge you to work with the Biden Administration on reinstating an assault weapons ban. Assault weapons are exceptionally deadly firearms that are commonplace in mass shootings. They are generally capable of firing far more bullets, far faster than manual-action hunting rifles. An assault weapons ban may have prevented the May 14th massacre. I also urge you to ensure that long ignored and underfunded black and brown communities like East Buffalo have the funding and supports available to ensure we recover from this tragedy and prevent and treat the trauma of violence that has held back communities of color for generations. In addition, anti-black hate crime legislation must also be passed to address white supremacy and remove these hateful ideologies from our society. Again, thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss this important matter and I look forward to answering any questions you may have.

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Testimony of Sarah Burd-Sharps
Senior Director of Research
Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund

US House Committee on Financial Services,
Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations Hearing on
Thoughts and Prayers Are Not Enough:
How Mass Shootings Harm Communities, Local Economies, and Growth

July 19, 2022

Good afternoon, Chair Green, Ranking Member Emmer, and members of the Committee. It is an honor to appear before you to testify on the economic cost of gun violence in the United States.

My name is Sarah Burd-Sharps, and I am the senior director of research at Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, the largest gun violence prevention organization in the United States.

The devastating mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, two months ago resulted in 19 children and 2 teachers fatally shot and over a dozen others injured. This one horrific incident of gun violence left in its wake dozens of shattered families, children who don't want to return to school, and a traumatized community. Without a doubt, the human cost of gun violence—the people who are taken from us and survivors who are wounded—is the most devastating. No dollar amount could ever fully convey this cost for families and survivors.

But examining the serious economic consequences of gun violence is essential as well for understanding just how extensive and expensive this crisis is. Our hope is that this research will help guide you and your colleagues as you weigh different policies and actions to build safer communities.

The economic consequences of the Robb Elementary School shooting are an estimated $244.2 million dollars, of which $10.2 million is borne by taxpayers.[1] This is millions in taxpayer dollars that could instead be invested in essential public goods like education, workforce development, and in building healthier, safer, more sustainable communities.

With tragic and numbing regularity in the United States, we hear of shootings on our streets, in grocery stores, schools, hospitals, and too many other places. Each day in America, roughly 300 people join the toll of those killed and injured with guns, lives cut short or forever altered by gun violence.[2] Today's focus is on mass shootings—of which there were 27 over the course of 2021

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[1] Costs estimated from Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Calculate the Economic Cost of Gun Violence," accessed July 14, 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/economic-cost-calculator/.
[2] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "EveryStat: United States," accessed July 2022, https://everystat.org/.

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in which four or more people were killed. These shootings resulted in 136 fatalities.[3] But I want to be clear, mass shootings, while devastating, costly, and fear-inducing far beyond the location where they occur, make up less than 1 percent of all gun deaths and injuries.[4]

While not everyone directly experiences gun violence, we all pay an economic price for this epidemic.

To garner an understanding of the economic cost of gun violence, Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund worked with the leading health economist researching the cost of various types of injuries, Ted R. Miller, along with Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE) colleagues David I. Swedler and Bruce A. Lawrence, and Kathryn Schnippel Bistline, formerly at Everytown, to calculate the economic cost of gun violence in the United States. This work is based on gun death data from the CDC, nonfatal gun hospitalization data from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality of the US Department of Health and Human Services, as well as hospital records from state governments and hospital associations, and extensive peer-reviewed research that establishes costs for police investigations, court salaries, incarceration, mental health services, and more.[5]

We found that the unrelenting epidemic of gun violence has an economic consequence to our nation of $557 billion annually.[6] To put that into perspective, that works out to the equivalent of 2.6 percent of our gross domestic product[7] on gun violence each year. Year after year.

And the government share of these costs—paid for by taxpayers—is $12.6 billion each year.[8] That's nearly $35 million tax dollars each day that could instead help to support secure firearms storage awareness campaigns, local community violence intervention programs, and other efforts that research shows can prevent this violence from occurring in the first place.

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[3] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Mass Shootings in America," accessed July 14, 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/maps/mass-shootings-in-america/. Everytown defines a mass shooting as an incident in which four or more people were killed, excluding the shooter.

[4] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Mass Shootings in America," accessed July 14, 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/maps/mass-shootings-in-america/.

[5] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "Methodological Note for the Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/methodological-note-cost-of-gun-violence/.

[6] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/.

[7] Everytown analysis of Q4 2019 (Line 1: "Gross Domestic Product") data from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, "National Income and Product Accounts, Table 1.1.5. Gross Domestic Product," June 29, 2022, https://apps.bea.gov/iTable/iTable.cfm?reqid=19&step=2#reqid=19&step=2&isuri=1&1921=survey.

[8] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "Methodological Note for the Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/methodological-note-cost-of-gun-violence/. Government costs paid for by taxpayers fall into six categories: medical and mental health care for firearm injuries; emergency transport; police response; criminal justice; Medicaid for general (non-firearm-related) healthcare; and federal Supplemental Security Income.

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This $557 billion is a conservative estimate. It represents the lifetime costs associated with gun violence starting at the scene of a shooting, continuing on to the long-term health care and criminal justice costs plus losses to workers and employers. And it includes estimates for the quality of life lost for the suffering and lost well-being of a victim and their family due to gun death and injury.[9]

It does not even begin to include the wider ripple effects on whole communities. And those wider costs are not marginal. If you talk to any school superintendent, Mayor, or trauma surgeon in a town that has experienced a shooting, they can produce a long list of costs that extend far beyond the immediate items we are counting. These include costs to address the trauma of children who are afraid to go to school, costs to neighborhood businesses and home values, and the larger reverberations on all those who live in a community where gun violence happens or share an identity with someone who was the target of a shooting, whether it's domestic violence survivors, LGBTQ+ individuals after the 2016 shooting at Pulse nightclub, or Black people after the shooting in Buffalo two months ago.

This $557 billion price tag breaks down to economic consequences in the following basic areas:
- $2.8 billion in medical costs (both out-of-pocket from families, employer-covered costs, plus government programs);
- $11.0 billion in police and criminal justice costs (government costs borne by taxpayers);
- $0.5 billion in costs to employers;
- $53.8 billion in work-loss (forgone earnings of those killed or disabled); and
- $489.1 billion in quality-of-life costs.[10]

The annual cost for overall gun violence in the United States is $1,698 for every resident, combining directly measurable costs plus losses incurred by survivors and their families, employers, the government, and society more broadly.

However, in states with stronger gun laws, the economic toll of gun violence is less than half this amount, whereas in states where gun laws are weaker and gun injuries and fatalities are higher, gun violence costs residents double or more this amount.[11]

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[9] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "Methodological Note for the Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/methodological-note-cost-of-gun-violence/.
[10] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/.
[11] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/.

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For example, Mississippi has long been challenged by high levels of gun violence.[12] And it has the weakest gun laws in the country.[13] At an average cost of $3,323 per resident each year, Mississippi has the second-highest per resident cost of gun violence in the US.[14] This is an incredibly high burden for Mississippians.

On the other hand, in Massachusetts—which has the lowest rate of gun deaths[15] and some of the strongest gun laws in the nation[16]—residents carry a far lighter burden. The average cost of gun violence is $503 per resident, the lowest outlay from gun violence in the US,[17] allowing the state and its residents to allocate far more dollars to beneficial and productive investments.

After each of these crushing mass carnage events, the discussion turns to solutions. Let's be clear: the United States is not the only country with mental illness, domestic violence, video games, or hate-fueled ideologies. But our gun death rate is 13 times higher than our peer high-income countries.[18] And our homicide rate is 26 times higher.[19] The chief difference is easy access to guns. Even within the US, states with stronger gun laws and lower gun ownership rates have lower rates of mass shootings.[20]

While we are so grateful for the actions Congress took recently to address gun violence, there is still much more we can do, and there is no time to waste. In the mass shootings since 2018 that killed at least 10 people, approximately half were committed by a shooter who was under 21 years old.[21] The law has long acknowledged that people under 21 years old are a high risk population by prohibiting people under 21 from buying handguns at gun dealers and prohibiting handgun possession by people under 18. And Congress recently passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act which requires purchasers under 21 to submit to an enhanced background check. The Senate should follow the House's lead and pass legislation to raise the age to purchase firearms to age 21 and require background checks on all gun sales. Further, mass

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[12] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "EveryStat: Mississippi," accessed July 2022, https://everystat.org/#Mississippi.
[13] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Everytown Gun Law Rankings," accessed July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/.
[14] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/.
[15] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "EveryStat: Massachusetts," https://everystat.org/#Massachusetts.
[16] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Everytown Gun Law Rankings," accessed July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/.
[17] Everytown For Gun Safety Support Fund, "The Economic Cost of Gun Violence," July 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/report/the-economic-cost-of-gun-violence/.
[18] Everytown analysis of the most recent year of gun deaths by country (2015 to 2019), GunPolicy.org (accessed January 7, 2022).
[19] Everytown analysis of the most recent year of gun homicides by country (2013 to 2019), GunPolicy.org (accessed January 7, 2022).
[20] Paul M. Reaping et al., "State Gun Laws, Gun Ownership, and Mass Shootings in the US: Cross Sectional Time Series," BMJ 364 (2019): I542, https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.l542.
[21] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Mass Shootings in America," accessed July 14, 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/maps/mass-shootings-in-america/.

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shooters often display warning signs.[22] Extreme Risk laws that provide a process to temporarily remove guns from people exhibiting warning signs are in place in 19 states and have successfully been used to prevent mass shootings and other types of gun violence.[23] While Congress recently included hundreds of millions of dollars for states to implement Extreme Risk laws in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the Senate should also pass the Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act that recently passed the House.

Our research clearly shows we are spending precious funds on an epidemic that brings nothing of benefit and plenty of heartbreak and shattered lives. We place ourselves at a severe economic disadvantage in the globally competitive economy with these enormous outlays.

With 110 lives taken and $1.5 billion in cost and loss every day, there is no time to waste.

Thank you again, Chair Green, Ranking Member Emmer, and members of the Committee, for allowing me to testify today. I look forward to your questions.

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[22] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Mass Shootings in America," accessed July 14, 2022, https://everytownresearch.org/maps/mass-shootings-in-america/.
[23] Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, "Extreme Risk Laws Save Lives," December 29, 2021, https://everytownresearch.org/report/extreme-risk-laws-save-lives/; Garen J. Wintemute et al., "Extreme Risk Protection Orders Intended to Prevent Mass Shootings," *Annals of Internal Medicine* 171, no. 9 (2019): 655–58, https://doi.org/10.7326/M19-2162.

Robert Brian Ingram
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My Name is Brian Ingram, I own a collection of restaurants in Minnesota, many of which are located in Saint Paul. I first wanted to say thank you for this opportunity to share my experience.

My entire life has been dedicated to cooking and bringing people together over a meal. After working over 30 years in the corporate hospitality industry my wife, Sarah, and I had a vision of opening restaurants that would not only serve guests but give back to the community and create safe, diverse and inclusive work environments for our staff. We believe, as a business, if you take resources out of a community you should put your resource's right back into them. We made a commitment to donate 3% of all sales back to those in need locally who were facing housing and food insecurities.

In 2019, we formed Purpose Restaurants and opened our first concept - a breakfast bar called 'Hope'. Housed in the heart of St. Paul in a historic 140-year-old firehouse, which was built by volunteers. From the day we opened our doors we have stood with our community. Our guests have helped us to identify families in crisis through Hope and Prayer cards on each table. When the pandemic hit, we closed our restaurants to the public and transitioned into community kitchen's feeding families in need.

To date, we have given away more than 300,000 meals and over 2 million pounds of groceries and hygiene products. We even held free socially distanced drive-through proms when schools were closed to give the kids in our city a prom they would never forget.

We stood with our city when George Floyd was tragically killed. The weeks following Floyds death our city was enraged with passion and unrest. Our city burned. We fed protestors, first responders, law enforcement and national guard members. As a man of faith, I believe God calls us to feed all of his people and to stand with those that need it most - without judgment or question.

The last few years have been some of the most trying days of our lives and not just because of Covid. As business began to reopen, crime in our city continued to escalate.

I watched first hand as bullet holes pierced my restaurant's walls and windows. I watched criminals use my parking lot as a staging ground. SUVs with no license plates, pulling unmarked trailers to loot and destroy our city.

I made phone calls to 911 and was told "we have no officers to respond".

Even after active protesting stopped, crime has continued to be a daily concern. All 7 of our restaurants and offices have been robbed numerous times, on many occasions by the same criminal. I made calls to our district attorneys, police department, and elected officials to try and find out WHY this person was let out of

jail, just days after robbing us. In frustration, and lack of law enforcement's ability to respond, we bagan sharing security footage from our many break-ins on social media which eventually lead to their arrest. I have had to sleep on my couch with a bat out of fear for my family's safety, after exposing the criminals on social media.

I have watched as thieves with no fear walk into my restaurants and search out our employee break area and steal their purses and backpacks. These are hardworking hospitality workers that have already been financially devastated by COVID.

I have watched these criminals patrol our parking lots and eventually car jack one of our guests. I have seen criminals enter our restaurants, search through jackets hung up on coat racks to find keys. Then walk outside, hit the car alarm button to identify the car, then steal the car - knowing the entire time an employee was watching them but couldn't respond out of fear.

I have reviewed our surveillance cameras watching criminals break into our office and restaurants. These criminals have no fear that alarms were going off and strobe lights flashed. They never even hesitated to continue with the robbery. Breaking into our office, taking the time to prybar a safe bolted to the ground, roll it down 2 flights of stairs, put the safe on a dolly and roll it to their car, pop the trunk and place it hanging halfway out of the car. They walked casually to their car and drove off with absolutely no fear of being caught!

I have showed up at our restaurants, oftentimes arriving before the police because they do not have enough officers to properly patrol our neighborhoods. I have had to walk into harm's way to try and secure my business and protect our staff.

I received a phone call from a manager that was dealing with a violent person tossing over tables, spitting at and threatening employees while refusing to leave the restaurant. The police responded they didn't have any officers available. I had to get in my car and run down to the restaurant and confront this person. I had to remove the person from my restaurant and stop the threat of violence against my staff and guests. Eventually the police did arrive and I was told they could not arrest this person! They couldn't even put him in a patrol car and remove him from my restaurant! They knew this criminal by name, they knew how he worked the system. They finally convinced him to leave. I was then told by the officer *"you cannot protect your business; you have to let them do what they are going to do. You can only protect your home with force but not your business."*

Far too often, I've had to sit with an employee who was attacked leaving their shift, robbed of their daily tips. Hospitality workers have endured so much over the past few years, now they have to worry, *"Will I be assaulted at work? Will I be robbed on my way to my car? How can I find transportation that is safe because I can't stand at a bus stop or train station and feel safe?"*

I have sat with team members as they told me their difficult decision to leave the hospitality industry because they no longer feel safe working in a restaurant. In addition, late night traffic has decreased by at least 50% because customers do not want to be out late. Because of this, I have chosen to close all my restaurants by 10pm, cutting our late night revenue by 40%. We continue to open restaurants in St. Paul

but our customers are choosing suburban dining over fears of violence in the city. We have now taken businesses we intended to open in the city to the suburbs.

We recently lost one of our own.. our kitchen manager at Hope. He passed away from a different type of violence, an accidental drug overdose due to fentanyl laced. He even texted his dealer 'I think something's wrong' and the dealer texted back 'you will be fine!' That dealer is still on the streets today! Fentanyl has killed more young adults Ages 18-45 then Covid, Cancer, Car Accidents or Suicide claiming over 40,000 lives in the past year. This is a mass murder.

In response to this violence in our city, we have paid for funeral expenses of children from 7 different families who were murdered in our city in the past two years. We have used our restaurants as safe meeting places for community discussions with local government, law enforcement and citizens to discuss community safety plans.

I'm heartbroken by the mass shooting taking place around our country. I'm also heartbroken by the unrelenting violence taking place in our neighborhoods and our cities that nobody seems to want to address. People are assaulted every day on our city streets, local businesses are burglarized, staff robbed, and guests carjacked. These criminals are being released everyday to go back out and do it again. Local judges have adapted their own catch and release program. In extreme violent crimes for sentencing judges are often downward departing these cases.

Criminals have never cared about our laws or our communities. Criminals find ways to exploit our laws and use them against us. That has been proven over and over in our city.

I'm asking all of you to address the real problem: criminals fear nothing today. They know responses will most likely be slow and they know if they are caught, they will be back out on the street in most cases within hours. I'm asking you to please begin to address this problem today, not tomorrow, not form a subcommittee to discuss your hopes and dreams of policing and criminal reform but to immediately begin to enforce the rule of law.

We can and must do better with policing and criminal reform but we must not ever allow criminals to run our cities. All of our lives and the success of small business rely on it.

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Opening Statement and Testimony of

Ruchi Singh

Assistant Professor

Terry College of Business, University of Georgia

on

"Thoughts and Prayers Are Not Enough: How Mass Shootings Harm Communities, Local Economies, and Economic Growth"

before the

Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

Committee on Financial Services

U.S. House of Representatives

July 19, 2022

Subcommittee Chair Green, Ranking Member Emmer, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today. I am Ruchi Singh, Assistant Professor of Real Estate at the Terry College of Business at the University of Georgia; Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Homer Hoyt Institute; a Research Affiliate at the IZA Institute of Labor Economics; and a Co-Editor of the Journal of Real Estate Finance and Economics. I speak only for myself today.

My academic research since 2016 has focused on real estate economics and the economics of crime. I will be drawing today on my own research and on the evidence from the broader academic literature on the effects of mass shootings and gun violence. It is extremely important to understand the negative effects that such incidents have, so that steps can be taken both to reduce the likelihood of such incidents and to provide appropriate support to those who suffer the impacts.

I am honored to contribute to the discussion on this important topic today.

Background

The number of mass shootings is high in the United States compared to that in other developed countries.[1] The number of such episodes has risen in the past few years. The database of known shootings in the United States maintained by the Gun Violence Archive[2] shows that 700 mass shootings[3] occurred in 2021; this is an increase from the 611 mass shootings that occurred in 2020, and a significant rise from the 417 mass shootings that occurred in 2019. There have been more than 340 mass shootings so far this year (as of July 17, 2022).

My comments today will focus specifically on the context of schools. I will first talk about the impact of such mass shootings that have occurred at schools. I will then discuss a certain kind of policy that may reduce violent crimes near schools, and mention some things to think about in considering policies to reduce school shootings.

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[1] https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2022-us-gun-violence-world-comparison/ (last accessed July 16, 2022).
[2] https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/
[3] The Gun Violence Archive classifies an incident as a mass shooting if four or more people are injured or killed – not including the shooter.

Let me begin by sharing some statistics on incidents of firearm discharge on school grounds. Data collected by Everytown for Gun Safety show that 347 incidents of gunfire occurred on school grounds[4] of an elementary, middle, or high school in the United States between 2013 to 2019. These data show that 270 people were wounded and 129 people were killed as a result of these gunfire incidents.[5] In addition, a significant number of students who were not wounded or killed were exposed to these incidents, which could have had a negative impact on their mental health. The Washington Post estimated that as of May 2022, around 311,000 students at 331 schools have been exposed to gun violence at their schools during school hours since the 1999 Columbine incident.

Effect of mass shootings in schools on house prices

I am currently working on a paper with Dr. Juan S. Muñoz-Morales of the IÉSEG School of Management studying the effect of mass shootings in schools on residential real estate prices.[6] We define mass shootings using the definition adopted by the Stanford Mass Shooting of America data project.[7] In our paper, a mass shooting is defined as a gun-related episode of violence with three or more victims (not necessarily fatalities), not including the shooter; it is an episode that does not involve gangs, drugs, or organized crime. We examine eleven incidents of such mass shootings in schools that took place across the United States from 1998 to 2014.

A large body of academic research finds that crime, in general, negatively affects real estate prices in the area.[8] This is likely to be unsurprising to most people because households might prefer to stay away from areas with high levels of crime to avoid becoming victims of such crimes in the future, and to avoid the associated losses they would incur. However, a mass shooting incident at school is extremely unlikely to be repeated in the same area. Nevertheless, we find that house prices in the school attendance area of the affected school decline after such an incident. This

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[4] This refers to every time a firearm discharges a live round inside or into a school building or on (or onto) a school campus or grounds. Incidents in which a person brought a gun into a school but did not discharge it are not included.
[5] https://everytownresearch.org/report/preventing-gun-violence-in-american-schools (last accessed July 16, 2022).
[6] Muñoz-Morales, J., and Singh, R., (2022) "Do School Shootings Erode Property Values?" (Work in Progress)
[7] Different academic papers often adopt slightly different definitions of mass shootings.
[8] See, for instance, Thaler (1978), Lynch and Rasmussen (2001), Gibbons (2004), Pope (2008), Linden and Rockoff (2008), Ihlanfeldt and Mayock (2010), and Pope and Pope (2012).

decline could result from the desire of the parents of affected students to move out of the area, and from homebuyers' reluctance to move into these areas either because of (1) an irrational, negative association with the school in their minds, or (2) a rational and correct anticipation of a lower quality of educational experience for at least the next few years. We estimate the magnitude of this house price decline to be 2.4 percent on average over a four-year period following mass shootings at schools.[9] We also find suggestive evidence that the negative impact on house prices starts to fade away around seven years after the incident.

Our findings complement that of Gourley (2019), who estimates the effect of the 1999 Columbine shooting incident on housing values. Gourley documents that house prices in the Columbine catchment area declined by 5.7 percent compared to other properties in the rest of Jefferson County in the first year after the Columbine shooting.

Impact on students of exposure to school shootings

A number of academic studies show that students are negatively impacted in various ways after being exposed to shooting episodes at school. These studies did not restrict their attention only to mass shootings. For instance, a recent study (Cabral et al. 2021) found exposure to a school shooting incident led to higher rates of absenteeism and an increased probability of students repeating grades over the following two years. Such students also suffered negative impacts in the long term; they were less likely to graduate from high school, less likely to enter college, and less likely to graduate from college. Furthermore, they also had lower earnings, and they were less likely to be employed at the ages of 24 to 26. They also show that after such incidents, these schools experience a higher turnover of teachers and teaching support staff.

Other researchers have also found similar evidence of lower test scores and increases in absenteeism as a result of exposure to school shootings. For instance, Beland and Kim (2016) find that fatal shootings in high schools significantly decrease enrollment of students in grade 9 (which is the high school entrance grade) and test scores, and Levine and McKnight (2021) find that exposure to school shootings leads to lower test scores and an increase in chronic absenteeism (an

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[9] Because we are still working on this paper, we caution that this estimate is subject to revision.

absence rate of greater than 10 percent). Moreover, Rossin-Slater et al. (2020) find that the use of antidepressant medications increases after such incidents in the areas where the affected schools are located. Finally, Levine and McKnight (2021) show that shootings lead school districts to spend more money on support services (which include counseling and security but may also represent other services).

More broadly, several studies have examined the effect on students of exposure to violent crimes – not necessarily involving guns. These studies also find adverse effects on short- and long-term outcomes of students who have been exposed to violent crimes.[10]

Reducing exposure of students to violent crime

In our paper, "Do more eyes on the street reduce crime? Evidence from Chicago's safe passage program" (*Journal of Urban Economics* 2019), Dr. Daniel McMillen, Dr. Ignacio Sarmiento, and I examine one potential solution for reducing crime: placing civilian guards around schools. Specifically, we analyze the effectiveness of the Chicago Public School Safe Passage program, which draws upon parents and other adults from the local community to act as civilian guards around schools during arrival and dismissal times. We find that the presence of "more eyes" on the street reduced crime, especially violent crime. Moreover, the program resulted in improved school attendance. Our cost-benefit analysis suggests that this program is a cost-effective way of reducing crime around schools. While we did not show any direct evidence of such a program on school shooting incidents, our work does imply that such programs are likely to reduce the exposure of students to violent crimes in general.

It is important to recognize that school shooting incidents are of different types. More students are exposed to gun violence at their schools because of personal attacks and crime-related shootings

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[10] For instance, Burdick-Will (2013) finds that increase in violent crime in schools negatively affects learning and has an adverse effect on test scores. Schwartz et al. (2021) find that exposure to violent crime results in lower test scores, and that the negative effect increases with exposure. Laurito et al. (2019) find that students have lower test scores following exposure to violent crime if they attend schools perceived as being less safe or if they have a weak sense of community. Grogger (1997) shows that violence in schools reduces the likelihood that a student will graduate from high school and the probability that a student will attend college. Billings and Hoekstra (2019) show that an increase in school and neighborhood crime-prone peers increases arrest rates at ages 19 to 21.

than indiscriminate shootings, although the latter get more media and public attention (Levine and McKnight 2020). While community policing is likely to reduce crime-related shootings, this may have a limited effect on reducing indiscriminate shootings.[11] Thus, when designing policies intended to prevent school shootings, policymakers should consider multi-pronged approaches.

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[11] Levine and McKnight (2020) highlight this point.

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Personal Statement from La'Shea Cretain of El Cajon, California

On October 3, 1996, I was 18 years-old living in Opelousas, Louisiana when my ex-boyfriend showed up to my family's house and shot me in the back five times in front of my young children before taking his own life.

At the time, I was a single mother of two working at McDonalds making $4 an hour with no health benefits, no child support, just struggling to survive in more ways than one.

I was in a coma and in the ICU for weeks, and I faced months of rehabilitation where I learned how to walk and speak again. In the immediate aftermath, state medicaid paid for my hospital stay and my family supported my children.

During my fight to survive, I decided to name the five bullets in my body after the five elements that helped see me through – FIGHT, FAMILY, FAITH, FORGIVE and FORGET. I think of them as The Power of Five. I'm a positive person, and I try to stay busy and give back to others as much as I can, but I definitely have low days from time to time.

Like in 2013, when I realized that the physical pain of living with these five bullets was unbearable, and my doctors told me I should just go on disability. I was only in my 30's, my kids were in high school, and I wasn't going to give up the FIGHT.

On the day's where the pain was so unbearable to the point where I couldn't get out of bed, I was supported by the two best caretakers in the world - my children. How does one even calculate the costs of their sacrifices?

26 years later, and I continue on with pain treatment and therapy, but I cannot begin to calculate the tremendous cost gun violence has caused me: emotionally, physically, and economically.

Honestly, I count myself lucky compared with people who have lost their loved ones to gun violence. Although I live every day with pain from my wounds, I am so grateful that I survived and got the chance to raise my beautiful children who have advanced to college education while also staying on path myself to graduate with my doctorate in business administration in Fall 2025.

Projected Impact of Gun Laws on Corporate Profits in Texas

- June 07, 2022

More Fortune 500 companies are located in Texas than in any other state. Texas successfully used low taxes and minimal regulations as bait to recruit companies like Tesla and Oracle. The state promoted these "advantages" in ads highlighting their "free-market" environment and criticizing the "tax and spend policies of liberal leadership" in Democrat-run states. Four million people migrated to Texas over the past ten years. Our economic models predict a reversal, however.

State of Texas corporations on the Fortune 1000 list generate $2.2 trillion in revenue, $158 billion in profit. They have a market value of $3.8 trillion and employ 2.5 million people nationwide.

Revenue ($M)	Profit ($M)	Market Value	Employees	Assets ($M)
$ 2,182,322	$ 158,267	$ 3,853,624	2,598,038	$ 3,960,146

We continue to believe this increased corporate presence in Texas imposes a tax on the nation as a whole. Texas allows anyone 21 or older to carry handguns without training or licenses, and maintains lower gun purchase age limits. Beyond the recent abortion bill, which allows people to sue those who "aid and abet" an abortion and receive at least $10,000 in successful cases, the state also blocked public schools from requiring masks, taxing healthcare systems nationwide.

These policies are a hidden tax on both the wellbeing and the actual finances of US citizens, imposed by a single state. The national monetary impacts are real - "schools spend hundreds of millions of dollars on security, building reinforcements, trainings and drills, and the federal government spends more millions for campus officers. To accommodate them, municipalities across the country spend a fortune on police and equipment.." Recent events show the ineffectiveness of these expenditures.

Changes in the social environment do not bode well for the state. School shootings have increased and are unfortunately predicted to continue, given lax gun laws in the State. These will have an increasingly negative impact on Texas corporations, businesses and groups.

We believe growing in-state gun violence growth leads to elevated levels of anxiety on the part of employees. This increased level of concern will negatively impact productivity. Many employees will be more often focused on the safety of their children than employees in other states.
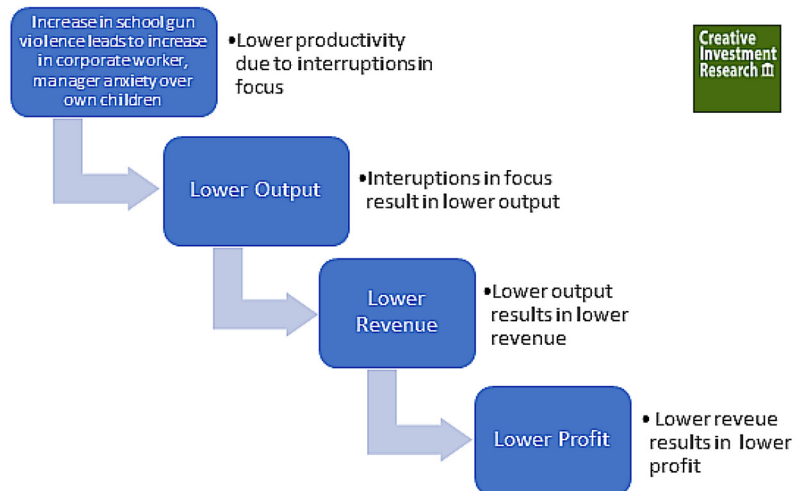
This will cause interruptions in concentration. These distractions impact workers and managers, even if sporadically, resulting in lower corporate output. Lower output levels lead to lower profits, other things equal, relative to corporate headquarters located outside of the state.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) mandates that companies understand the impact they have on all aspects of society, including economic, social, and environmental (ESG)

impacts. "To engage in CSR means that, in the ordinary course of business, a company is operating in ways that enhance society and the environment instead of contributing negatively to them."

Corporations headquartered in Texas who do not oppose lax gun laws will, under CSR, be tied to the "racism, anti-immigration hatred, misogyny, war imagery, neo-Confederate fantasies, and cartoonishly vile versions of masculinity" that Texas gun laws facilitate. Given the fact that these positions are contrary to the desires of most Americans, they will also be tied to an anti-democratic desire for minority rule, and the desire to eliminate voting rights and the rights of "women, immigrants, Black people, queer people, trans people – all of whom have been targeted by mass shootings in recent years."

Other CSR and ESG factors, including international issues, a reevaluation of the value of fossil fuels, and increased domestic political instability, will also lead to Texas being a less attractive destination for corporations over the years.

We will provide our estimate of the dollar value of this gun related revenue and profit loss in the coming weeks.

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The Economic Cost of Gun Violence

$557 Billion Annually, Comparable to 2.6 Percent of US Gross Domestic Product

7.19.2022

SUMMARY

At a moment when the United States needs to marshal all its resources to invest in education, worker skills, and building healthier, safer, more sustainable communities, our federal, state, and local governments are spending a combined average of nearly $35 million each day to deal with the aftermath of gun violence across the country.

Put simply, America cannot afford gun violence.

Executive Summary

In an average year, gun violence in America kills 40,000 people, wounds twice as many, and has an economic consequence to our nation of $557 billion.

Without a doubt, the human cost of gun violence—the people who are taken from us and the survivors whose lives are forever altered—is the most devastating. In addition to this human impact, examining the serious economic consequences of gun violence offers a wider lens for understanding just how extensive and expensive this crisis is.

This staggering $557 billion figure is five times the nation's budget for the Department of Education, which funds preschool through college for millions of Americans. If directing tragedies were prevented from occurring in the first place, the vast funds spent in the aftermath of gun violence could be directed toward beneficial and productive investments such as educating the next generation.

This $557 billion problem represents the lifetime costs associated with gun violence, including three types of costs: **immediate costs** starting at the scene of a shooting, such as police investigations and medical treatment; **subsequent costs**, such as treatment, long-term physical and mental health care, earnings lost to disability or death, and criminal justice costs; and cost estimates of **quality of life lost** over a victim's life span for pain and suffering of victims and their families.

As survivors, families, communities, employers, and taxpayers, we all pay for the enormous costs associated with this violence, whether we own a gun or not. The daily toll is staggering:

- **Taxpayers, survivors, families, and employers** pay an average of **$7.79 million** daily in health care costs, including immediate and long-term medical and mental health care, plus patient transportation/ambulance costs related to gun violence, and lose an estimated $145.91 million per day related to work missed due to injury or death.

- **American taxpayers** pay **$30.16 million** every day in police and criminal justice costs for investigation, prosecution, and incarceration.

- **Employers** lose an average of **$1.47 million** on a daily basis in productivity, revenues, and costs required

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to recruit and train replacements for victims of gun violence.

— **Society** loses **$1.34 billion** daily in quality-of-life costs from the suffering and lost well-being of gun violence victims and their families.

The large variation in rates of gun deaths and injuries in the 50 states and Washington, DC, translates into substantial differences in the economic burden from the violence.

Compiling this information is vital so that policymakers and constituents can understand how resources are currently being spent and to provide direction for a different tomorrow. The average annual cost for overall gun violence in the United States is **$1,698** for every resident in the country. However, in states with stronger gun laws, the economic toll of gun violence is less than half this amount, whereas in states where gun laws are weaker and gun injuries and fatalities are higher, gun violence costs residents double or more this amount per person.

CALCULATE THE COST OF GUN VIOLENCE

Calculate the cost of gun violence in your local community using our interactive tool.

Introduction

On May 24, 2022, an 18-year-old boy shot 38 people, 21 fatally, including 19 children and two teachers—at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.[1] This one horrific incident of gun violence left in its wake unspeakable human tragedy, but also an estimated $2,94.2 million price tag, of which $10.2 million is borne by taxpayers.[2] Today in the United States we are all paying an enormous economic cost, as well as an unmeasurable human cost of trauma and loss, for our failure to prevent gun violence.

This report doesn't try to put a price on human lives. Rather, it details the depth and breadth of America's gun violence crisis in an effort to show yet another reason why we must work to solve it now. Quantifying what we spend in the aftermath of a shooting—whether the shooting was unintentional, an assault, a shooting by police, or an act of suicide—helps us understand the price we pay for this violence.

This report highlights the costs to survivors, their families, and employers, and costs borne by the government and paid for with taxpayer dollars. It includes three types of costs: out-of-pocket and other directly measurable costs (such as medical in-ques, court and police salaries), indirect costs (such as lost wages due to disability or death), and intangible quality-of-life costs to account for pain and suffering.

All of these economic consequences ultimately pale in comparison to the pain of losing a life or a loved one. Our hope is that by combining strong data with survivors' testimonies, we present a holistic picture of America's gun violence epidemic and the sense of urgency to solve it.

Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund worked with the leading health economist researching the cost of gun violence, Ted R. Miller, and other researchers at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), notably David J. Swedler and Bruce A. Lawrence, as well as Kathryn Schnippel Birtline and Erica Jade Mullen, to calculate the economic impact of gun violence. Data featured in this report is from the federal Healthcare Cost and Utilization Project (HCUP), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and state hospital records for 2019, and other peer-reviewed studies as detailed in the Methodological Note. This report uses an Injury Cost Model developed by PIRE that the federal government has employed for decades, such as in the CDC's work on costing injuries from a broad array of causes, including gun violence.[3]

Everytown and PIRE's previous analysis on economic costs of gun violence relied on an estimated Value per Statistical Life lost to an injury or death of $5.5 million (in 2018 dollars), derived from the US Department of Transportation. Subsequently, the US Department of Health and Human Services prescribed a new amount for the Value per Statistical Life lost of $11.3 million (in 2019 dollars).[4] In order to be consistent with current federal government data, this report uses the new amount, resulting in a considerable increase in total costs based on higher quality-of-life lost estimates. Our wage loss estimate has also been updated with data from the most recent available business cycle (2010 to 2018).

The Breakdown: $557 Billion in Gun Violence Costs

$2.8 billion

Medical Costs
Immediate and long-term medical care, mental health care, and ambulance and patient transport

$53.8 billion

Work-Loss Costs
Income lost because of victim death and disability, caregiver work losses, and perpetrator incarceration

- **$11.0 billion**

  Police & Criminal Justice Costs
  Police response and investigation, court administration staff and processes, and incarceration

- **$0.5 billion**

  Employer Costs
  Employer costs for lost revenue and productivity

- **$489.1 billion**

  Quality-of-Life Costs
  Value of pain and wellbeing lost by victims and their families

Costs to Taxpayers, Survivors, Families, and Employers

Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr. was known to say that taxes are the price we pay for a civilized society.[1] Taxation buys our children's education, economic security when we are older, garbage pickup, park maintenance, food and medicine safety regulation, public safety, and much more. These government services contribute to the good of our society.

What is clear from this report's analysis is that while not every household has a gun, and while not all communities experience high levels of gun violence, we all bear the economic burden of injuries and deaths caused by firearms. Roughly $12.62 billion in tax money per year pays for our country's gun violence epidemic. Instead of funding education, social services, economic redevelopment grants, and so many other vital public goods from which we all benefit, we are spending precious funds on an epidemic that brings nothing of benefit and plenty of heartbreak and shattered lives.

While costs of course vary depending on the circumstances of the incident, each gun death costs US taxpayers an average of $273,904 for the initial and long-term repercussions of that incident, and each nonfatal gun injury costs $25,150.[7]

$274,000	$25,000
Each gun death costs US taxpayer an average of $273,904.	Each nonfatal gun injury costs US taxpayer an average of $25,150.

Medical costs: Taxpayers, survivors, families, and employers share billions of dollars in medical costs related to both immediate and long-term medical care, mental health care, and ambulance and patient transport from a shooting incident. The price tag of directly measurable medical costs borne by taxpayer totals $1.37 billion annually.[8]

With the average medical costs for a firearm injury ultimately costing nearly as much as the US median household income for an entire year,[9] it isn't hard to see how medical bills from gunshot injuries can sometimes add up and financially devastate families. The ongoing, complex nature of the medical and mental health care that some gun violence survivors require means that these costs can last years, decades, or a lifetime.

DeAndra Yates-Dycus's son "Dre" was shot and survived. His medical bills cost more than $10 million over six years.

READ DEANDRA'S STORY

Medical

— Medical care including Medicaid

— Mental health care

— Ambulance and patient transport

Medical

— Immediate medical treatment

— Follow-up medical care, rehabilitation, prescriptions, etc.

— Mental health care services for victims and immediate family members

— Coroner services, as applicable

Work-loss costs: Across the country, gun violence victim and perpetrator work-loss accounts for $53.77 billion per year. Families feel the loss of a missing monthly paycheck and benefits—plus the burden of caring for the wounded—even more acutely when the person who was wounded or killed was supporting children or was a main breadwinner. While perhaps not intuitive, it is important to consider both victims' and perpetrators' economic losses to understand the full scope of gun violence on our society and what we lose when guns shatter lives.

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Work Loss

— Forgone earnings or work due to victim injury or death and from perpetrator incarceration

— Wage-equivalent for unpaid household and caregiver work for victims

Taxpayer Costs: Criminal Justice Services

In addition to the government share of medical care, taxpayers foot the bill for $11.01 billion per year for police investigation, prosecution, courts, and incarceration following a shooting.

TAXPAYER COSTS

Police & Criminal Justice

—— Police response and investigation

—— Court administration

—— Public prosecutors and defenders

—— Jail and prison incarceration

Jim Burch, President of the National Police Foundation, shares the economic toll and trauma that law enforcement experience.

READ JIM'S STORY

Employer Losses

In addition to the general health-care-related costs that employers cover for things like health insurance coverage, disability insurance, and workers' compensation, employers can also shoulder a number of costs when an employee is a victim of gun violence. When survivors' wounds leave them unable to work, the economy as a whole suffers. Employers experience $534.91 million per year in direct costs related to gun violence. This encompasses the costs to productivity such as lost revenue due to unfilled jobs, the value of the time supervisors spend adjusting schedules to cover for lost work, and the cost of recruiting and training replacements when necessary.

EMPLOYER LOSSES

Lost Revenue and Productivity

—— Lost productivity for victims' employers

—— Lost revenue in case of unfilled absence

—— Recruiting and training replacement workers

Carolyn Tuft relies on Medicare after being wounded and losing her daughter to gun violence in 2007.

READ CAROLYN'S STORY

Lost Quality of Life

The damage caused by gun violence, of course, is not limited to the individual who was shot. When a person's life is cut short or altered in this way, the trajectory of their family's life changes forever as well. And the high cost that society bears extends far beyond medical bills.

In America, gun violence costs an estimated $489.08 billion annually in lost quality-of-life. Quality of life lost represents the present value of what was irreparably damaged when a victim's life was cut short or a survivor was permanently disabled by gun violence, with a higher amount for younger victims with years of life ahead of them.

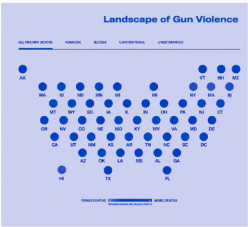
QUALITY-OF-LIFE COSTS

Pain and Suffering

—— Estimate of the intangible loss due to either a life cut short or a person permanently disabled by gun violence.

While these estimates are enormous, they are in fact very conservative. They do not include the indirect impact that gun violence has on many other people in our country, which, if included, would put the price far higher. While this report's quality-of-life lost estimate includes individuals who were shot and their immediate family, it does not include siblings, extended family members, or the millions of Americans who have witnessed gun violence and been marked by the trauma of it. The collective trauma we all feel when a mass shooting, homicide, or suicide occurs certainly isn't free.

The pain and suffering caused by a single gun can ripple through an entire family, as is the case with gun suicide, which account for nearly six in 10 gun deaths [a] and 60 percent of the total cost of gun violence in America. In comparison to gun homicides and assaults, gun suicides have lower economic costs associated with them—largely because less is spent on criminal justice and incarceration costs—but the immeasurable cost in pain and suffering is a crushing weight to bear.

McKay Moore Sohlberg's husband died by suicide, putting her in financial uncertainty.

READ MCKAY'S STORY

Cost by State

Not surprisingly, states with high levels of gun violence face higher associated costs, whereas states with lower levels of gun violence and strong commonsense gun laws face a lower financial burden. Mississippi has long been challenged by high levels of gun violence, with an average of 686 gun deaths per year over the past five years and a rate of gun homicide that has increased. 129 percent over the past decade. At an average price tag of **$3,323** per resident each year, Mississippi has the **second-highest** per resident cost of gun violence in the United States, which translates into a very high burden for the state.

Massachusetts, on the other hand, can allocate far more taxpayer dollars to productive investments for its residents. Massachusetts has the lowest rate of gun deaths in the United States, with the rate of gun homicide having gone down 6 percent over the past decade. At an average cost of **$905** per resident each year, Massachusetts has the **lowest** per resident outlay from gun violence in the United States (see figure and map below).

The Per Resident Economic Cost of Gun Violence by State

Source: Analysis by Ted R. Miller, David I. Swedler, Adonca Schrager-Butkin, 2021, and EveryStat based on 2019 nonfatal gun injuries and 2019 gun deaths in 2019 dollars. For further details, see Methodological Note.

See data on the economic cost in your state on EveryStat.

LEARN MORE

Landscape of Gun Violence

ALL PROHIBITED GUNS   VANGED   SUICIDE   UNINTENTIONAL   UNDETERMINED

FEWER DEATHS ← → MORE DEATHS

In states with stronger gun laws, such as Connecticut, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and New York, the human and economic toll of gun violence—with a per resident cost below $800 annually—results in more government funds to invest in education, health care, workforce development, and other valuable services and programs that can address underlying causes of gun violence. In states where gun laws are weaker and gun fatalities are higher, including Mississippi, Montana, and Wyoming, the cost of gun violence is around four times higher, at over $3,800 per resident.

The next graphic illustrates these wide differences by comparing two states with similar population sizes but vastly different firearm death and injury rates and costs resulting from gun violence. Missouri has a population of 6.2 million residents, but with a rate of 20.4 deaths per 100,000 residents and 377 injuries per 100,000 residents, the annual burden of gun violence is $17.6 billion. This compares to Washington State, with a slightly larger population of 7.6 million residents but much lower costs—$11.9 billion—due to its substantially lower firearm death rate of 12.1 and firearm injury rate of 21.5 per 100,000 residents.

Neither amount is cause for celebration. But Missouri is a state with some of the weakest gun laws in the country, including no law requiring background checks on unlicensed gun sales and a law allowing residents to carry hidden, loaded handguns in public with no permit or safety training required. Washington, on the other hand, requires background checks on all gun sales, has an Extreme Risk law that allows loved ones or law enforcement to petition a court to temporarily prevent someone in crisis from accessing firearms, and requires that all gun owners store their firearms securely.

Similar Population Sizes, Vastly Different Costs

WASHINGTON STATE

$1,559/
resident

Population: 7,614,893
Overall cost of gun violence: $11.9 billion

MISSOURI

$2,875/
resident

Population: 6,177,957
Overall cost of gun violence: $17.6 billion

Conclusion

"There are so many things our country needs. If we didn't have to be supporting the people whose lives have been ripped apart from somebody irresponsibly buying a gun and using it, it would make a huge difference. Everybody's taxes are paying for the damage."

—Carolyn Tuft, gun violence survivor

With more than 115,000 people shot and killed or wounded each year, the human cost of gun violence in America is staggering. Families, friends, and entire communities suffer the long-term and irreparable impacts of these tragedies—physically, emotionally, and financially.

While the stories of gun violence survivors carry immense power in driving change, quantifying the financial burden of gun violence offers another important strategy and data point for doing so. This rigorous study finds that gun violence costs America an estimated $557 billion annually, toward which taxpayers pay an average of $12.62 billion, and survivors and their loved ones often pay additional millions over their lifetimes—not to mention the immense cost of quality of life lost. Further, some states and communities—many of which already face heightened gun violence and weaker gun safety laws—carry more of this cost than others, worsening disparities and challenges faced, and lessening the resources available to prevent this cycle from starting.

This report is part of Everytown's efforts to paint a more complete picture of the staggering cost of gun violence in America. Calculating the economic cost of gun violence is a critical addition to this narrative because it puts a price on our collective inaction and equips policymakers, advocates, local leaders, and all Americans with additional information that can help advance action to prevent shootings and keep our families safe.

Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund would like to gratefully acknowledge the work of Ted R. Miller, David I. Swedler, and Bruce A. Lawrence of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, and Kathryn Schnippel Bisbee and Erica Jade Mullen, for their work to calculate the cost of gun violence; Kaelyn Forde for report drafting and survivor interviews; and Jim Burch, McKay Moore Sohlberg, Carolyn Tuft, and DeAndra Yates-Dycus for their willingness to share their stories.

METHODOLOGICAL
NOTE FOR THE
ECONOMIC COST OF
GUN VIOLENCE
Methodological Note

Everytown Research & Policy is a program of Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, an independent, non-partisan organization dedicated to understanding and reducing gun violence. Everytown Research & Policy works to do so by conducting methodologically rigorous research, supporting evidence-based policies, and communicating this knowledge to the American public.

THE LATEST

Gunfire on School Grounds in the United States
Report

Gun Suicide: The Lesser-Known Side of City Gun Violence
Rates of people who die by gun suicide in cities are on the rise, but, until now, a dearth of city-level data leaves it often overlooked.
Fact Sheet

How To Stop Shootings and Gun Violence in Schools: A Plan to Keep Students Safe
We need meaningful actions to keep our schools safe, actions that address what we know about gun violence in America's schools.
Report

Armed Extremism in Buffalo: Online Gun Communities Provide a Path of Radicalization and Training to a Racist Shooter
The Buffalo, NY mass shooting in May 2022 at Tops Friendly Market was an act of white supremacist, hate-motivated violence.
Report

DID YOU KNOW?

Women in the U.S. are 28 times more likely to be killed by guns than women in other high-income countries.

Everytown analysis of the most recent year of gun deaths by country (2015 to 2019), GunPolicy.org (accessed January 7, 2022).

Everytown Gun Law Rankings

Contact Us

Join Us.

Every day, more than 110 people in America are killed with guns. The gun homicide rate in the U.S. is 26 times higher than that of other developed countries, but research shows that common-sense public safety laws can reduce gun violence and save lives.

JOIN US

The Economic Cost of Gun Violence | Everytown Research & Policy

Safety in Numbers Blog Series

Gun Violence in America

Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund®

Texas House of Representatives

Investigative Committee
on the **Robb Elementary Shooting**

Representative Dustin Burrows, Chair
Representative Joe Moody, Vice Chair
The Honorable Eva Guzman, Member

July 17, 2022

HOUSE INVESTIGATIVE COMMITTEE
ON THE ROBB ELEMENTARY SHOOTING
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
INTERIM REPORT 2022

A REPORT TO THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
88TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE

DUSTIN BURROWS
CHAIR

COMMITTEE CLERK
PAIGE HIGERD

Investigative Committee On
the Robb Elementary Shooting

July 17, 2022

Dustin Burrows   P.O. Box 2910
Chair   Austin, Texas 78768-2910

The Honorable Dade Phelan
Speaker, Texas House of Representatives
Members of the Texas House of Representatives
Texas State Capitol, Rm. 2W.13
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Mr. Speaker and Fellow Members:

The Investigative Committee on the Robb Elementary Shooting of the Eighty-seventh Legislature hereby submits its interim report for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Rep. Dustin Burrows

Rep. Joe Moody   Justice Eva Guzman

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This is the interim report of the Investigative Committee on the Robb Elementary Shooting of the Texas House of Representatives.

Conscious of the desire of the Uvalde community and the public at large to receive an accurate account of the tragedy at Robb Elementary School, the Committee has worked diligently and with care to issue this interim report of its factual findings. The Committee's work is not complete. We do not have access to all material witnesses. Medical examiners have not yet issued any reports about their findings, and multiple other investigations remain ongoing. The Committee believes this interim report constitutes the most complete telling to date of the events of and leading to the May 24, 2022, tragedy.

This Committee has prioritized factual accuracy, as will be evident from our attention to conducting our own interviews and documenting our sources of information. Still, based on the experiences of past mass-shooting events, we understand some aspects of these interim findings may be disputed or disproven in the future.

The Committee issues this interim report now, believing the victims, their families, and the entire Uvalde community have already waited too long for answers and transparency.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Committee gratefully acknowledges the assistance of all who helped with its investigation and the preparation of this interim report, including Clement Abbondandolo, Margo Cardwell, Courtney Chaplin, Matthew Crow, Casey Garrett, Harrison Garrett, Paige Higerd, Ted Liggett, Michael Massengale, Kolton McDougald, and Ellic Sahualla.

DEDICATION

The Committee submits this report with great humility and the deepest respect for the victims and their families. It is the Committee's sincere hope that this brings some clarity for them as to the facts that happened. This report is meant to honor them.

You will notice the name of the attacker is not mentioned. We also will not use his image, so as not to glorify him.

Nevaeh Alyssa Bravo

Nevaeh is remembered as a playful girl who put a smile on the faces of everyone around her. Her family meant the world to her, and she often helped her father around the house. Nevaeh loved the colors pink and purple and enjoyed playing softball and riding her bike.

Jacklyn "Jackie" Jaylen Cazares

Jackie is remembered as a caring girl who enjoyed singing and making TikTok videos. Jackie loved animals (especially her four dogs) and wanted to become a veterinarian; she also dreamt of visiting Paris. Jackie was known as someone who would go out of her way to help anyone.

Makenna Lee Elrod

Makenna is remembered as the light in the lives of those who knew her. She loved the color purple, softball and gymnastics, and spending time with her family—especially time on the ranch with her dad. Her smile lit up rooms, and she liked to leave hidden notes for her family to find.

Jose Manuel Flores, Jr.

Jose is remembered as loving and kind. He was an honor roll student who wanted to be a police officer when he grew up to help protect other people. Jose was an amazing big brother who looked out for his siblings, and his parents called him "a helper" because he was always pitching in at home.

Eliahna "Ellie" Amyah Garcia

Ellie is remembered as a gentle, kindhearted girl who loved spending time with her family and was very close with her grandparents. She enjoyed playing basketball and wanted to be a cheerleader one day. Ellie adored the colors pink and purple and loved a nice bowl of ramen noodles. She was a long-term planner who was already picking dresses and dances for her quinceañera five years away.

Irma Garcia

Irma is remembered as courageous and selfless—a wife and mother of four who was always willing to lend a helping hand to anyone who needed one. She was a 23-year teacher. Irma died protecting her students, and her heroism will be remembered forever.

Uziyah Sergio Garcia

Uziyah is remembered as an outgoing boy who loved his family as well as his "cousins and brothers from another mother." He was always fair and full of life, and he enjoyed running, swimming, football, and playing his Nintendo Switch and Oculus.

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Amerie Jo Garza

Amerie is remembered as considerate and fun-loving. She was protective of her three-year-old brother and would kiss him every morning before she went to school. Amerie loved swimming, drawing, and vanilla bean frappés from Starbucks. She dreamt of becoming an art teacher one day.

Xavier James Lopez

Xavier is remembered as an active boy who loved swimming and playing little league baseball for his team, the Blue Jays. He was lively, energetic, and always eager to dance, especially the cumbia with his grandmother. Xavier was known for wearing stylish clothes and had a smile that could cheer anyone up.

Jayce Carmelo Luevanos

Jayce is remembered as a happy, thoughtful boy with many friends who always seemed to be running around his yard with him. He made his grandparents a pot of coffee every morning and would leave notes saying that he loved them. Dinosaurs were one of his favorite things.

Tess Marie Mata

Tess is remembered as a natural athlete who enjoyed softball, soccer, and gymnastics—she especially loved doing backbends in gymnastics. Tess was a fan of the Houston Astros and even played the same position as her favorite player, José Altuve, in softball. She was saving up money for a family vacation to Disney World.

Maranda Gail Mathis

Maranda is remembered as smart and nice, a shy tomboy who loved the color purple, especially when it was on unicorns and mermaids. Maranda also enjoyed spending time outdoors and had an incredible imagination.

Eva Mireles

Eva is remembered as dedicated and vibrant. She enjoyed CrossFit, hiking, spending time with her dog, Kane, and being with her family. Her smile was bright and her commitment to her students was still unwavering after 17 years as an educator. She was a hero who never gave up throughout an impossible ordeal.

Alithia Haven Ramirez

Alithia is remembered as talented and bighearted. She was a gifted artist who wanted to go to art school in Paris one day. She was also a mature role model to her siblings and was always thoughtful about helping those in need.

Annabell Guadalupe Rodriguez

Annabell is remembered as empathetic and loyal. She enjoyed spending time with her sisters and watching TikToks. Her favorite color was blue—especially blue found on butterflies. Annabell was on the honor roll and known for being a sharp student.

Maite Yuleana Rodriguez

Maite is remembered as sweet and competitive. She loved learning about animals and the ocean, especially dolphins, whales, and dogs. She was an honor student who dreamt of attending Texas A&M to become a marine biologist. Her favorite color was green, and she enjoyed a #13 from Whataburger—always with a side of sliced jalapenos.

Alexandria "Lexi" Aniyah Rubio

Lexi is remembered as intelligent and driven. She had a contagious smile and enjoyed playing softball and basketball, which she excelled at. Lexi was an all-A student who wanted to become a lawyer one day, and she was interested in social and political issues because she wanted to make a difference.

Layla Marie Salazar

Layla is remembered as witty and lively. She loved singing with her parents while coming to and from school and going with her grandparents for tacos. She was also an avid swimmer, dancer, and runner who'd won six races at a recent field day.

Jailah Nicole Silguero

Jailah is remembered as a joy to be around, a pure delight who enjoyed making TikToks to show off to her family and friends. Jailah was always dancing and liked to spend time outdoors as well.

Eliahna Torres

Eliahna is remembered as loving and compassionate. She enjoyed making other people laugh and was a "master of jests." She was also an amazing softball player up for a spot on the city's all-star team. Eliahna was a natural leader who was also known for her warmth and selflessness.

Rojelio Fernandez Torres

Rojelio is remembered as a clever, positive boy who enjoyed being outdoors in his free time as well as playing football and videogames like Pokémon. Rojelio was always eager to help others and had a real love for life.

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There is nothing we can do to heal the wounds suffered by the Uvalde community, nothing that can redress the loss of 21 souls stolen from their families and friends. We must critically examine the contributing factors to the horrific massacre at Robb Elementary School to try to provide answers and prevent similar tragedies in the future. A safer environment for all Texas children is one of the ways we can honor the memory of the students and teachers murdered in Uvalde.

Across our state, men and women who work in the fields of education and law enforcement exemplify both service and sacrifice. Teachers dedicate themselves to the betterment of society through the promise of a new generation. Police officers see danger and run to meet it, knowing the cost and stepping forward to pay it. In pursuing these high callings, teachers and police officers live in the public square—nurturing, encouraging, protecting, preserving. They render this service on behalf of us all, but especially for children, who are the most innocent and vulnerable among us. Like the rest of us, educators and law enforcement officers sometimes fail at crucial moments. When they do, that does not diminish the good work and sacrificial service of their professions as a whole.

Of necessity, this report will describe shortcomings and failures of the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District and of various agencies and officers of law enforcement. At the outset, we acknowledge that those same shortcomings could be found throughout the State of Texas. We must not delude ourselves into a false sense of security by believing that "this would not happen where we live." The people of Uvalde undoubtedly felt the same way. We must all take seriously the threats to security in our schools and the need to be properly prepared to confront active shooter scenarios.

Other than the attacker, the Committee did not find any "villains" in the course of its investigation. There is no one to whom we can attribute malice or ill motives. Instead, we found systemic failures and egregiously poor decision making. We recognize that the impact of this tragedy is felt most profoundly by the people of Uvalde in ways we cannot fully comprehend.

The School

With hindsight we can say that Robb Elementary did not adequately prepare for the risk of an armed intruder on campus.

The school's five-foot tall exterior fence was inadequate to meaningfully impede an intruder. While the school had adopted security policies to lock exterior doors and internal classroom

doors, there was a regrettable culture of noncompliance by school personnel who frequently propped doors open and deliberately circumvented locks. At a minimum, school administrators and school district police tacitly condoned this behavior as they were aware of these unsafe practices and did not treat them as serious infractions requiring immediate correction. In fact, the school actually suggested circumventing the locks as a solution for the convenience of substitute teachers and others who lacked their own keys.

The school district did not treat the maintenance of doors and locks with appropriate urgency. In particular, staff and students widely knew the door to one of the victimized classrooms, Room 111, was ordinarily unsecured and accessible. Room 111 could be locked, but an extra effort was required to make sure the latch engaged. Many knew Room 111's door had a faulty lock, and school district police had specifically warned the teacher about it. The problem with locking the door had been reported to school administration, yet no one placed a written work order for a repair.

Another factor contributing to relaxed vigilance on campus was the frequency of security alerts and campus lockdowns resulting from a recent rise of "bailouts"—the term used in border communities for the increasingly frequent occurrence of human traffickers trying to outrun the police, usually ending with the smuggler crashing the vehicle and the passengers fleeing in all directions. The frequency of these "bailout"-related alarms—around 50 of them between February and May of 2022—contributed to a diminished sense of vigilance about responding to security alerts.

Other factors delayed the reporting of the threat to the campus and to law enforcement. Low-quality internet service, poor mobile phone coverage, and varying habits of mobile phone usage at the school all led to inconsistent receipt of the lockdown notice by teachers. If the alert had reached more teachers sooner, it is likely that more could have been done to protect them and their students.

In violation of school policy, no one had locked any of the three exterior doors to the west building of Robb Elementary. As a result, the attacker had unimpeded access to enter. Once inside, the attacker continued into the adjoining Rooms 111 and 112, probably through the door to Room 111, and apparently completely unimpeded. Locking the exterior and interior doors ultimately may not have been enough to stop the attacker from entering the building and classrooms. But had school personnel locked the doors as the school's policy required, that could have slowed his progress for a few precious minutes—long enough to receive alerts, hide children, and lock doors; and long enough to give police more opportunity to engage and stop the attacker before he could massacre 19 students and two teachers.

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Because of these failures of facilities maintenance and advance preparation, the attacker fired most of his shots and likely murdered most of his innocent victims before any responder set foot in the building. Of the approximately 142 rounds the attacker fired inside the building, it is almost certain that he rapidly fired over 100 of those rounds before any officer entered.

The Responders

Since the 1999 Columbine tragedy, the law enforcement community has recognized the critical importance of implementing active shooter training for all officers, regardless of specialty. Also, all officers must now acknowledge that stopping the killing of innocent lives is the highest priority in active shooter response, and all officers must be willing to risk their lives without hesitation.

At Robb Elementary, law enforcement responders failed to adhere to their active shooter training, and they failed to prioritize saving the lives of innocent victims over their own safety.

The first wave of responders to arrive included the chief of the school district police and the commander of the Uvalde Police Department SWAT team. Despite the immediate presence of local law enforcement leaders, there was an unacceptably long period of time before officers breached the classroom, neutralized the attacker, and began rescue efforts. We do not know at this time whether responders could have saved more lives by shortening that delay. Regardless, law enforcement committed numerous mistakes in violation of current active shooter training, and there are important lessons to be learned from each faulty assumption and poor decision made that day.

The Uvalde CISD's written active shooter plan directed its police chief to assume command and control of the response to an active shooter. The chief of police was one of the first responders on the scene. But as events unfolded, he failed to perform or to transfer to another person the role of incident commander. This was an essential duty he had assigned to himself in the plan mentioned above, yet it was not effectively performed by anyone. The void of leadership could have contributed to the loss of life as injured victims waited over an hour for help, and the attacker continued to sporadically fire his weapon.

A command post could have transformed chaos into order, including the deliberate assignment of tasks and the flow of the information necessary to inform critical decision making. Notably, nobody ensured that responders making key decisions inside the building received information that students and teachers had survived the initial burst of gunfire, were trapped in Rooms 111 and 112, and had called out for help. Some responders outside and inside the building knew that information through radio communications. But nobody in

command analyzed this information to recognize that the attacker was preventing critically injured victims from obtaining medical care. Instead of continuing to act as if they were addressing a barricaded subject scenario in which responders had time on their side, they should have reassessed the scenario as one involving an active shooter. Correcting this error should have sparked greater urgency to immediately breach the classroom by any possible means, to subdue the attacker, and to deliver immediate aid to surviving victims. Recognition of an active shooter scenario also should have prompted responders to prioritize the rescue of innocent victims over the precious time wasted in a search for door keys and shields to enhance the safety of law enforcement responders.

An effective incident commander located away from the drama unfolding inside the building would have realized that radios were mostly ineffective, and that responders needed other lines of communication to communicate important information like the victims' phone calls from inside the classrooms. An offsite overall incident commander likely could have located a master key more quickly—several people on campus had one. An offsite overall incident commander may have suggested checking to see if officers could open the door without a key—in hindsight, they probably could have. An offsite overall incident commander who properly categorized the crisis as an active shooter scenario should have urged using other secondary means to breach the classroom, such as using a sledgehammer as suggested in active shooter training or entering through the exterior windows.

Uvalde CISD and its police department failed to implement their active shooter plan and failed to exercise command and control of law enforcement responding to the tragedy. But these local officials were not the only ones expected to supply the leadership needed during this tragedy.

Hundreds of responders from numerous law enforcement agencies—many of whom were better trained and better equipped than the school district police—quickly arrived on the scene. Those other responders, who also had received training on active shooter response and the interrelation of law enforcement agencies, could have helped to address the unfolding chaos.

Yet in this crisis, no responder seized the initiative to establish an incident command post. Despite an obvious atmosphere of chaos, the ranking officers of other responding agencies did not approach the Uvalde CISD chief of police or anyone else perceived to be in command to point out the lack of and need for a command post, or to offer that specific assistance. Several will suggest they were misled by false or misleading information they received as they arrived; however, the "chaos" described by almost all of them demonstrates that at a

minimum, responders should have asked more questions. This suggests a training deficiency, in that responding officers failed to adequately question the absence of command. Other responders failed to be sufficiently assertive by identifying the incident commander and offering their assistance or guidance, or by assuming command in the absence of any other responder having expressly done so. In this sense, the entirety of law enforcement and its training, preparation, and response shares systemic responsibility for many missed opportunities on that tragic day.

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On June 3, 2022, Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives Dade Phelan created by proclamation the Investigative Committee on the Robb Elementary Shooting, pursuant to Rule 1, Section 17, and Rule 4, Sections 57 and 58, of the Rules of the House of Representatives. Three members were appointed to the Committee: Representative Dustin Burrows, Chair; Representative Joe Moody, Vice-Chair; and the Honorable Eva Guzman, Public Member. The Speaker gave the Committee the same authority and duties conferred on standing committees under the rules, and the Committee is set to expire on the date the 88th Legislature convenes.

Speaker Phelan charged the Committee with the duty to "conduct all inquiries into the actions of any State or local officer, employee, department, agency, institution, or instrumentality and any political subdivision needed to make a complete and thorough examination of the facts and circumstances of the events relating to the violent acts, shootings, and murders at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde." In the conduct of its investigation, the Speaker charged the Committee to "examine the evidence developed by all law enforcement authorities" and to "acquire and analyze additional evidence as needed to make comprehensive findings." The Committee has the additional duty of providing assistance to the Select Committee on Youth Health and Safety and the Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety in the consideration of their joint charges on mass violence prevention and community safety. This Committee "shall submit a final report in the same manner as an interim study committee under Rule 4, Section 61, Rules of the House of Representatives."

Put more simply, this is a fact-finding committee. The Speaker has tasked other legislative committees with the difficult but critical responsibility of proposing policy in response to the tragedy at Robb Elementary School.

The Committee held its first meeting on June 9, 2022, in Austin, Texas. In an extensive briefing in executive session, Col. Steven C. McCraw, Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety, provided the Committee an overview of the status of the ongoing DPS investigation, including the attacker's background, the incident timeline, and the response by law enforcement. The Committee reviewed a composite video recording of the attacker's approach to the school and law enforcement's response. The meeting concluded with DPS agreeing to provide its evidence to the Committee.

The Committee then heard three days of testimony on June 16th, 17th, and 20th in Uvalde, Texas. Testifying witnesses included employees of the Uvalde CISD (including Robb

Elementary School staff), the Uvalde CISD Police Department, the Uvalde Police Department, the Department of Public Safety, and members of the attacker's family. On June 17th, all three members of the Committee visited the Robb Elementary School campus accompanied by Uvalde CISD Superintendent Dr. Hal Harrell, and the Committee paid its respects to the victims and to the community by laying a floral wreath at the school memorial.

Uvalde CISD Police Chief Pete Arredondo testified before the Committee in Austin, Texas, on June 21st followed by Sgt. Thomas Calabro with the Houston Police Department, who provided information about training and standard practices for law enforcement responses to active shooter scenarios and for the command and coordination of multiple responding law enforcement agencies.

The Committee returned to Uvalde on June 29th and 30th. On June 29th, the Committee interviewed Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin, four Robb Elementary School fourth grade teachers, and five employees of the Uvalde Police Department, including a dispatcher. The next day, June 30th, the Committee interviewed Uvalde CISD employee Becky Reinhardt, Uvalde County Precinct One Constable Johnny Field (by videoconference), and two peace officers who responded to the incident from the Department of Public Safety (a special agent and a lieutenant). That day, the Committee's investigators also interviewed Robb Elementary School teacher Arnulfo Reyes, the teacher in Room 111 who is still recovering from his injuries. The Committee received a report and an audio recording of the interview of Mr. Reyes.

On July 11th, the Committee reconvened in Austin to interview ALERRT Assistant Director John Curnutt and Uvalde County Sheriff Ruben Nolasco, both by videoconference. The Committee also conducted a follow-up interview of DPS Director McCraw.

The Committee interviewed all 35 witnesses in executive session, meaning that the sessions were closed to the public. Despite public expressions of frustration and even criticism that these meetings were conducted behind closed doors, the Committee is confident that its method served the goal of an objective fact-finding process. The Committee was able to engage witnesses in candid discussions that may not have been possible in public hearings or other settings.

In addition to the witnesses who appeared before the Committee in executive session, the Committee's investigators conducted at least 39 independent informal interviews, The Committee and its investigators have reviewed hundreds of crime-scene photos and dozens of audio and video recordings from the incident, including surveillance camera footage, mobile-phone video, 911 calls, radio transmissions, and body-worn camera footage. They reviewed recordings and summaries of witness interviews conducted and recorded by law

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enforcement agencies. Documentation received from the Department of Public Safety and reviewed by the Committee included an enormous trove of digital evidence, including data from mobile phones, cloud storage, and social media messages. The Committee received and reviewed thousands of pages of documents received from numerous agencies including ALERRT, ATF, Texas DPS, FBI, Texas School Safety Center, and Uvalde CISD. These documents included school audits and safety plans, school disciplinary records, employment records, criminal-history reports, dispatch logs, ballistics reports, firearms traces, gun store records, information about the victims, and various diagrams, sketches, and timelines. The Committee also invited and received suggestions from witnesses about how to improve policies relating to school safety, firearm safety, law enforcement training and resources, and active shooter response. The Committee genuinely appreciates the input from all witnesses, and it will be shared with the House committees formed to evaluate and propose policies to address mass violence prevention and community safety.

3 | ROBB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SECURITY & FACILITIES OVERVIEW

The Committee has great respect for teachers and all who dedicate their lives to the education of children.

As of the fall of 2020, there were 5,371,586 students in Texas schools. There are 1,204 school systems, most of which are independent school districts. The largest independent school district in Texas is in Houston, with 196,943 students enrolled for the 2020–21 school year. The smallest district is San Vicente ISD, which had five students for 2020–21.[1]

Most school districts have multiple campuses with multiple buildings. It is estimated that there could be as many as 80,000 buildings in the State of Texas that house children at various times during the school year. These are important facts to remember in the context of discussing policy related to school-hardening measures.

Uvalde CISD serves a rural community of 15,217 citizens.[2] The district's schools include Uvalde High School, Morales Junior High, Anthon, Flores, Robb, and Dalton elementary schools, and several alternative education programs.[3] The campus buildings range from over 100 years in age to the newest school, Uvalde High School, which was opened nearly four decades ago in 1983.[4] Uvalde CISD constructed many of those older buildings during times when the potential threats to students were much different than those faced today.[5] While no school could ever be built to prevent every conceivable threat, they can be built and operated in ways to better mitigate risk and impede potential threats from outside attackers.

Uvalde CISD Police Department

Until recently, the Uvalde Police Department was responsible for security in the Uvalde public schools. In 2018, Uvalde CISD established its own police department, headquartered at Uvalde High School. With nine different schools and a budget for six police officers, Uvalde CISD oversees more campuses than it has officers, and it has assigned no officer specifically to Robb Elementary. Instead, officers would regularly visit the Robb campus for a walk-through several

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[1] Source: Texas Education Agency.

[2] 2020 Census, https://data.census.gov/cedsci/all?q=Uvalde%20city,%20Texas.

[3] *See generally* www.ucisd.net.

[4] Committee testimony of Rodney Harrison, UCISD Maintenance and Operations Director (June 16, 2022).

[5] Committee testimony of Dr. Hal Harrell, Uvalde CISD superintendent (June 16, 2022).

times per week, usually lasting from 15–45 minutes.[6] Uvalde CISD Police Chief Pete Arredondo and his second-in-command, Lt. Mike Hernandez, also testified that they visited campuses and walked halls to "rattle doors" to confirm they were locked.[7]

Uvalde CISD police officers commonly carried two radios: one for the school district, and another "police radio" which transmitted communications from various local law enforcement agencies. While the school district radios tended to work reliably, the police radios worked more intermittently depending on where they were used.[8]

Active Shooter Plan

As directed by state legislation enacted in 2019,[9] Uvalde CISD adopted a policy for responding to an active shooter emergency. And Uvalde CISD deserves credit for having done so—they are one of the few Texas school districts recognized by the School Safety Center as having submitted a viable active shooter policy.[10]

Uvalde CISD Police Chief Arredondo and Director of Student Services Kenneth Mueller prepared a document titled "Annex 1 Active Shooter" and adopted it on April 15, 2020.[11] The document identified its purpose as seeking to "outline the local organization, operational concepts, responsibilities, and procedures to accomplish coordinated Administration,

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[6] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022) (couple times per week, approximately 15 minutes per visit); *see also* Committee testimony of Adrian Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 20, 2022) (usually took 30-45 minutes to walk Robb Elementary); Committee testimony of Jaime Perez, Robb Elementary head custodian (June 16, 2022) (about once per day, usually for less than an hour unless dealing with a problem); Committee testimony of Kenneth Mueller (June 16, 2022) (officers would float, visiting all elementary-school campuses). Uvalde CISD police officer Ruby Gonzalez described how she and her colleagues would rotate shifts based at the high school. The 7:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m. shift would begin with traffic control and watching the courtyard at the high school, followed by rounds to check in at other campuses, walk halls, and check doors. Similarly, the officer working the 9:00 a.m.–6:00 p.m. shift would visit various campuses in the afternoon. Committee testimony of Ruby Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 17, 2022).

[7] Testimony of Pete Arredondo, USCID police chief (June 21, 2022); Testimony of Lt. Mike Hernandez, Uvalde CISD Police (June 17, 2022).

[8] Committee testimony of Adrian Gonzalez, UCISD police officer (June 20, 2022).

[9] Tex. H.B. 2195, § 1, 86th Leg., R.S. (2019) ("A school district shall include in its multihazard emergency operations plan a policy for responding to an active shooter emergency. The school district may use any available community resources in developing the policy described by this subsection."), codified as Tex. Educ. Code § 37.108.

[10] *Cf.* Texas School Safety Center, 2017-2020 DAR Report: Findings on Safety and Security in Texas School Districts, *available* at https://txssc.txstate.edu/research/technical-reports/dar-2020/ ("[T]he EOP review indicated that of the 1,022 districts reviewed, only 200 had a viable active shooter policy. Of the remaining 822 districts, 626 districts did not have a policy in place and 196 districts had an insufficient policy.").

[11] *See* Uvalde Consolidated ISD, *Annex 1: Active Shooter* ¶ I ("The Uvalde CISD police department along with the Director of Student Services makes recommendations and creates plans to develop a safe environment and to lead the District to Mitigate, Prevent, Prepare, Respond, and Recover from potential active shooter situations.").

Teachers, District police officers, local law enforcement and first responders to Prevent, Prepare, Respond, and Recover from the possibility of an active shooter entering any of the District campuses."[12]

The plan called for utilization of "the National Incident Management System (NIMS) during an emergency to coordinate response efforts."[13] It further stated that "[t]he District's police officers, administrators, and teachers and support staff, along with the students have the daily responsibility to mitigate and prevent an active shooter situation," and that "[a]ll staff members and student[s] will know the proper procedures to follow if a suspected shooter is on the campus."[14]

With respect to securing doors, the active shooter policy stated:

> Staff will conduct inspections of classrooms to make sure doors and windows can be secured … .Doors to all classrooms will remain locked during instruction and the campuses will have one main entry point to the school. *Each staff member will know the procedures to follow in order to have any door or window repaired that will not lock.*[15]

The active shooter policy outlined a series of preventative safety measures that served as the "primary preventative strategy" to address "problems of violence, vandalism, disruptions and fear."[16] As applicable to Robb Elementary, these preventative measures included:

> POLICE OFFICERS – The district employs 4 officers. This includes a Chief, a detective, and two officers.[17]
>
> PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT. Local law enforcement agencies are invited to come to any of our campuses while they are on patrol. UCISD provides free breakfast or lunch to any law enforcement personnel visiting our campuses.[18]
>
> THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAMS – Every campus employs an interdisciplinary team of trained professionals that convene to identify, evaluate, classify and address threats or potential threats to school security. Following assessment, this team determines

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[12] *Id.* ¶ II.

[13] *Id.* ¶ IV.A.1; *see also id.* ¶ V.B ("All personnel assigned responsibilities in this plan are trained on NIMS concepts, procedures and protocols."). Regarding NIMS, the, training that defines operational systems that guide how personnel work together to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from incidents see generally https://training.fema.gov/nims/.

[14] Uvalde Consolidated ISD, *Annex 1: Active Shooter* ¶ IV.A.2.

[15] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.1.b (emphasis supplied).

[16] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.a.

[17] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.b. Uvalde CISD later hired two additional officers to bring its total force to six, though at the time of the attack on Robb Elementary there were only five officers employed.

[18] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.c.

appropriate response and intervention. This includes notification and involvement of parents, a suicide risk assessment, and the development of a written safety plan.[19]

SOCIAL MEDIA THREATS – UCISD utilizes Social Sentinel to monitor all social media with a connection to Uvalde as a measure to identify any possible threats that might be made against students and or staff within the school district.[20]

PERIMETER FENCING – Dalton, Anthon, and Robb have fencing that encloses the campus is designed to limit [*sic*] and/or restrict access to individuals without a need to be on the campus.[21]

RADIOS – Key staff have been provided radios to support campus communication processes.[22]

LOCKED CLASSROOM DOOR POLICY – Teachers are instructed to keep their classroom doors closed and locked at all times. Barriers are not to be used. Substitutes shall follow the same policy, with campuses ensuring they have access to the classrooms they need throughout the day. The Standard Response Protocol procedures are on the back of all of our badges issued to substitute teachers.[23]

STAFF TRAINING – All staff members are trained annually in emergency protocols for the campus. Key campus personnel are CPI-trained.[24]

STUDENT TRAINING & DRILLS – Students receive training on the Standard Response Protocol for lockout, lockdown, evacuate, shelter, and hold. In addition, drills are held for each of these emergency actions on a regular basis … .[25]

THREAT REPORTING SYSTEM – Students, parents, staff, and community members are encouraged to share information with us that is deemed troubling, so that we may take appropriate action. This includes information about weapons, threats, fights, drugs, self-harm, suicide or disclosures made that are concerning. Reports may be made online at ucisd.net, by contacting any campus administrator, district administrator or UCISD Police Officers.[26]

In the event of an active shooter incident, the policy expressly provided that upon verification of an active shooter, "the District police department Chief will become the person in control of the efforts of all law enforcement and first responders that arrive at the scene."[27] The response was to include, if possible, "secur[ing] the administration office as a command post

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[19] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.g.

[20] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.g.

[21] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.l. The Uvalde CISD director of maintenance and operations, Rodney Harrison, confirmed for the Committee that the fence around Robb Elementary was five feet high.

[22] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.p.

[23] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.r.

[24] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.s. "CPI" refers to the Crisis Prevention Institute, an international training organization that specializes in the safe management of disruptive and assaultive behavior. *See* https://www.crisisprevention.com/About-Us.

[25] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.t.

[26] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.2.v.

[27] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.4.b.

and retriev[ing] the critical information and data about the school's emergency systems, including communications, staff and student's locations, detailed floor plans and other important information, documents, items, and supplies that are prepared and readily available for use during the incident."[28]

The active shooter policy recognized that "[t]he district has primary responsibility for the health and safety of students, staff, substitute teachers, and visitors while on district property," and that "[d]uring an emergency *the district should coordinate law enforcement, health and medical services with other local first responders*."[29] The school district's police department was assigned the responsibility for "the Incident Command Center" and for being "first on scene to prevent or stop an active shooter,"[30] while the policy assigned to other "[l]ocal law enforcement and first responders" the function and responsibility to "follow the direction of the ICS leader to ensure proper procedures are followed" and to "[a]ccept assigned roles of ICS leader."[31]

Under a section titled "Direction and Control," the policy laid out a specific "line of succession":

> 1. Uvalde CISD police department – Chief Pete Arredondo
> 2. Uvalde CISD police department – Lt. Mike Hernandez
> 3. Director of Student Services – Kenneth Mueller[32]

The policy calls for the district to conduct a "post incident review … to analyze the process and make any corrective action as determined."[33]

ALERRT Standard for Active Shooter Training

Before joining the Uvalde CISD Police Department, Chief Arredondo received active shooter training from the ALERRT Center,[34] which the FBI has recognized as "the National Standard

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[28] *Id.* ¶ IV.B.4.f.

[29] *Id.* ¶ V.A.1 (emphasis supplied).

[30] *Id.* ¶ V.B.

[31] *Id.* ¶ V.B. "ICS" is not defined in Uvalde CISD's active shooter plan, but it refers to "Incident Command System." *See, e.g.,* Federal Bureau of Investigation & ALERRT, *Active Shooter Response – Level 1,* at STU 2-27 (v. 7.2, 2020) (noting that "[a] list of incident command courses can be found on the FEMA training web page at https://training.fema.gov/emiweb/is/icsresource/trainingmaterials.htm").

[32] Uvalde Consolidated ISD, *Annex 1: Active Shooter* ¶ VI.C.

[33] *Id.* ¶ VIII.C.

[34] Committee testimony of Pete Arredondo, UCISD Chief of Police (June 21, 2022). Chief Arredondo received the ALERRT training while working for the Laredo ISD police department, between his retirement from the Webb County Sheriff's Office in 2017 and his hiring as chief of the Uvalde CISD police in March 2020. *See id.* Uvalde Police Sgt. Daniel Coronado, who responded to Robb Elementary as well, also acknowledged receiving ALERRT training. Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police Department (June 20, 2022).

in Active Shooter Response Training."[35] Every school district peace officer in Texas must be trained on how to respond in active shooter scenarios.[36] Not all of them get ALERRT training, but Chief Arredondo and other responders at Robb Elementary did.

ALERRT's training program identifies the challenge for law enforcement responders of possibly having to work "with a small ad hoc team of individuals they may have never trained with before," such that "the only way to swing the tactical advantage back in favor of the [law enforcement] responder is through the use of effective teamwork and tactics."[37] The training identifies lessons to be learned from past active shooter incidents. From the Columbine tragedy in 1999, one lesson was that responders must have tools and training to immediately make entry and neutralize an active shooter threat.[38] Another Columbine lesson was the "Priority of Life Scale": innocent civilians come before law enforcement and other responders.[39] After Columbine, "[w]hile protecting the lives of officers remained a high priority, Stopping the Killing of innocent civilians took first priority. From that moment forward, every law enforcement officer was expected to be willing to risk his or her life without hesitation."[40] "Law enforcement officers were expected to distract, isolate, and neutralize the threat, even in tactically complex situations and when they lacked special training."[41]

A lesson from the Navy Yard Building 197 incident in 2013 was that "[t]he earlier an Incident Command structure can be established, the better," and this tragedy prompted an "Initial Incident Command" block to be added to the ALERRT Level 1 course.[42] The Pulse Nightclub

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But not all law enforcement officers receive this training, and several other law enforcement officers interviewed by the Committee stated they had not received ALERRT training. *E.g.*, Testimony of Sgt. Eduardo Canales, Uvalde Police Department (June 29, 2022) (none of UPD SWAT team has received ALERRT training); Committee testimony of Constable Johnny Field, Uvalde County Pct. 1 (June 30, 2022).

[35] *See generally* https://alerrt.org/about ("The ALERRT Center at Texas State University was created in 2002 as a partnership between Texas State University, the San Marcos, Texas Police Department and the Hays County, Texas Sheriff's Office to address the need for active shooter response training for first responders.").

[36] Tex. H.B. 2195, § 2, 86th Leg, R.S. (2019) ("A school district peace officer or school resource officer shall complete an active shooter response training program approved by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement."), codified as Tex. Educ. Code § 37.0812.

[37] Federal Bureau of Investigation & ALERRT, *Active Shooter Response – Level 1*, at STU 1-9 (version 7.2, 2020).

[38] *Id.* at STU 2-6.

[39] *Id.*

[40] *Id.* at STU 2-7.

[41] *Id.*

[42] *Id.* at STU 2-10; *see also id.* at STU 2-13 (Rt. 91 Harvest Music Festival incident in 2017 taught lesson of establishing unified command early on). The Incident Command module teaches: "Ideally, Incident Command will be established as the first [law enforcement] responder arrives on-scene, provides dispatch with a brief LCAN [i.e. Location, Condition, Actions, and Needs] size-up report, and assumes command." *Id.* at STU 7-6. The

incident from 2016 taught the importance of awareness of the distinction between hostage/barricade and active shooter scenarios.[43] The Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School incident in 2018 taught the importance of incident command structure for appropriate management of resources and that law enforcement responders must be prepared to use word-of-mouth communication when radio communications are overloaded.[44]

On the subject of communicating effectively, the ALERRT course teaches that effective communication is necessary for successful teamwork.[45] "Regional law enforcement agencies should continually train together to establish radio protocols for use during multi-agency active shooter response."[46] "Law Enforcement responders should be familiar with their regional communications plan but also be prepared to respond effectively without reliable radio communications."[47] "After giving a message, [law enforcement] responders should look for confirmation that the intended party received and understood the message."[48] "If radio communications are unreliable, it may be necessary to use runners to deliver messages."[49]

With respect to establishing incident command, law enforcement responders are encouraged to complete Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS) courses as early as possible in their careers.[50] The ALERRT training advises that "[t]he initial [law enforcement] responder to arrive at an active shooter scene becomes the Initial Incident Commander by default…."[51] Further, "[a]s soon as [a law enforcement] responder notices that there appears to be sufficient officers hunting for the attacker, that responder

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training acknowledges that "sometimes this is difficult because the first [law enforcement] responder to arrive on-scene may find him or herself immediately involved in a gunfight," and "[s]urviving and winning the gunfight should always take priority over considering Incident Command matters." *Id.* But "[a]s soon as immediate threats have been neutralized," law enforcement responders need to ensure that they communicate critical information to dispatch, including the assumption of command. *Id.*

[43] *Id.* at STU 2-12.

[44] *Id.* at STU 2-14.

[45] *Id.* at STU 2-23.

[46] *Id.*

[47] *Id.*

[48] *Id.*

[49] *Id.*

[50] *Id.* at STU 2-27.

[51] *Id.* at STU 2-28.

should find a secure location, take out their Active Shooter Response Card, assume Initial Incident Command, and begin completing tasks listed on the card."[52]
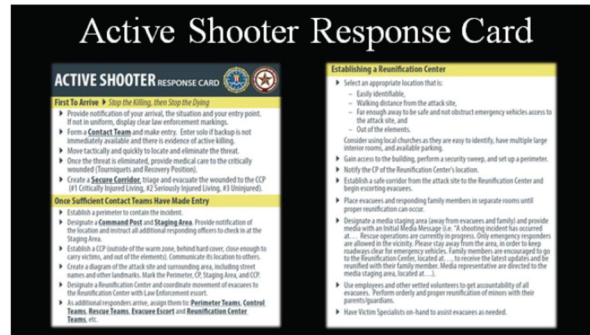
Slide 2-32. Active Shooter Response Card

Excerpt from ALERRT, Active Shooter Response—Level 1.

A later, more in-depth module on incident command describes the ICS process:

Take Command

The first step in the ICS process is for the first [law enforcement] responder who arrives on the scene … to simply take command. Command is passed up the chain as the scene or situation grows larger. As more officers arrive on-scene, command is passed on and assumed by higher levels, building the ICS tree. All active shooter Incident Command structures will grow. This is a fact, and they will continue to grow for the next several days after the shooter is down.

Taking command is as simple as saying "I have command." … This allows all oncoming resources to receive information and report to one person. Taking command is important because it will help stop freelancing and possible blue-on-blue scenarios.

Provide an LCAN Report

Next, the first [law enforcement] responder in should give a size-up report, or LCAN report. This is simply a Location, Condition, Actions, and Needs report telling follow-on units where the officer is at, what he or she sees on arrival, what he or she is doing or plans on doing, and what he or she needs to complete the mission … .LCAN reports

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[52] *Id.* ALERRT training teaches that every law enforcement responder, "even those recently hired, should carry the Active Shooter Response Card with them at all times," and "[t]hey should be prepared to assume command and start completing the tasks listed on the card within the first few minutes." *Id.* at STU 7-7; *see also id.* at STU 8-2 – 8-4(module 8.1, Incident Command System Instructor Walk-Throughs).

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should be updated as more actions are needed to give follow-on responders updated information as they are coming in. This will help with overconvergence and allow the ICS system to begin to set up … .The LCAN report should continue to be updated as the situation changes.

Assume Command

As more [law enforcement] responders arrive on the scene, someone should assume command of the outside of the building. This person could be a higher-ranking officer or any responder who sees enough personnel are inside and realizes that things need to be taken care of on the outside of the building (e.g., perimeter control, ambulance exchange areas, staging for all to set up, more contact teams).

Command will be passed from the interior commander … to the command person outside who can begin getting control of the chaos of the emergency. Eventually, this person will be relieved of his or her position and an overall commander will take charge of the situation during the next several stages of the event. As the incident stabilizes, command will downsize and the situation will move into an investigative phase. Units will be released to service and cut loose.

The main points to remember about ICS are that the first [law enforcement] responder must take command. This [law enforcement] responder must also give an LCAN report for oncoming units. Someone else on the outside of the building must then assume command from the first [law enforcement] responder and begin to help gain control of the chaos.[53]

The ALERRT training includes a module on "Entering Locked Buildings Quickly, Discreetly, and Safely," advising that "[r]esponders should be creative and make use of improvised tools to get inside the building however they can."[54] With respect to using keys, ALERRT teaches that "[o]ften, the quickest, most discreet, and safest method of entering a locked building is to locate a key—as long as keys can be located immediately," but "if a key cannot be located quickly, [law enforcement] responders should use another technique to enter the area without delay."[55] The training also suggests sledgehammers and pry tools as reliable, practical, and affordable breaching tools,[56] and a separate module anticipates the challenge of breaching closed and locked outward-opening interior doors, noting that "[m]any public buildings are required by law to have outward-opening doors with self-closing mechanisms for all high-occupancy rooms," and that law enforcement responders "should be prepared to encounter this type of door during an active response."[57]

[53] *Id.* at STU 8-2 – 8-3 (emphasis in original).

[54] *Id.* at STU 3-8.

[55] *Id.* at STU 3-9.

[56] *Id.* at STU 3-11 – 3-12.

[57] *Id.* at STU 4-22.

Uvalde CISD police officers visit school campuses in the event of lockdowns, which occurred relatively frequently at Robb Elementary due to its proximity to the intersection of Highway 83 and Highway 90. Chief Arredondo described a rise in bailouts: to avoid being stopped by law enforcement, vehicles loaded with undocumented immigrants traveling along highways leading from the border towns of Del Rio and Eagle Pass lead officers on high-speed chases that often end by crashing the vehicle and allowing the occupants to scatter.[58]

Uvalde, at the intersection of Hwy. 83 & Hwy. 90.   *Robb Elementary, near intersection of Hwy. 83 & Hwy. 90.*
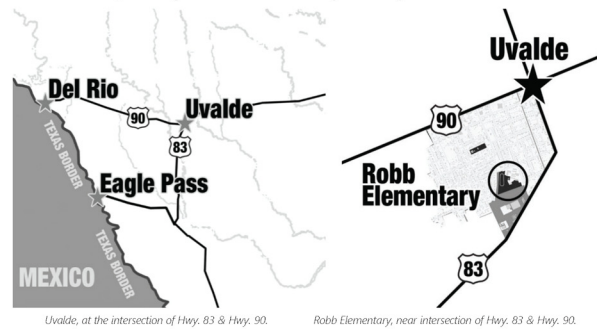
Numerous witnesses testified to the Committee that there has been an increase in bailout activity over the past 18 months.[59] Uvalde CISD Director of Student Services Kenneth Mueller testified that since February 2021, high-speed chases have been a daily event in the Uvalde area, causing Uvalde CISD schools to be secured or locked down frequently, with 47 "secure" or "lockdown" events happening since late February 2022, and approximately 90% of those

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[58] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police, at 29-30 (June 21, 2022).

[59] *See, e.g.*, Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022); *see also* Committee testimony of Lt. Mike Hernandez, Uvalde CISD Police(June 17, 2022) (confirming the frequency of bailouts in the neighborhood surrounding Robb Elementary). Regarding the impacts of bailouts on the Uvalde community, *see, e.g.*, Carine Hajjar, National Review, *Human-Smuggler 'Bailouts' Are Endangering Border Communities* (Apr. 12, 2022), available at https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/human-smuggler-bailouts-are-endangering-border-communities/ (featuring pre-tragedy interview of Uvalde Mayor Don McLaughlin, specifically identifying the risk to school-age residents of Uvalde).

being attributed to bailouts.[60] Uvalde CISD parents became so concerned about the number of bailouts occurring near the elementary-school campuses that they offered to hire off-duty police to supplement the Uvalde CISD police presence.[61]

School district witnesses also testified to another effect of the rising prevalence of bailouts. The alert system does not differentiate its signals between bailouts and other kinds of alerts, such as an active shooter situation. The series of bailout-related alerts led teachers and administrators to respond to all alerts with less urgency—when they heard the sound of an alert, many assumed that it was another bailout.

Raptor Technologies supplied the alert system Uvalde CISD used. Uvalde CISD had used Raptor's software to screen campus visitors for approximately 10 years. In the fall of 2021, Mueller viewed a presentation on Raptor's emergency management alert system, and he gathered the Uvalde CISD principals, who agreed that they needed it. Uvalde CISD purchased the software in October 2021, and the first Raptor alert occurred on February 8, 2022.[62]

By March 2022, as Uvalde CISD was implementing the Raptor alert system, there was a high volume of alerts. By utilizing the Raptor mobile phone application,[63] any Uvalde CISD employee could activate an alert. Staff at a school campus typically would first learn about a bailout from an external source. Then they would decide, depending on the proximity of the threat to the school, whether to initiate a "secure" alert or a "lockdown" alert.[64]

Raptor Alert application.

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[60] Committee testimony of Kenneth Mueller (June 16, 2022); *see also* Committee testimony of Lynn Deming, Robb Elementary fourth-grade teacher (June 29, 2022) (describing how most Raptor alerts have been for bailouts, and one happened on the Robb Elementary campus near the bus lane).

[61] Committee testimony of Kenneth Mueller (June 16, 2022).

[62] *Id*; *see* https://raptortech.com/raptor-alert/.

[63] Raptor Emergency Management Brochure, available at https://raptortech.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Raptor-EmergencyManagement-Brochure.pdf?emergency-management-software-for-schools.

[64] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022).

Chief Arredondo explained it was important to notify schools in the vicinity of the highways about bailouts because the passengers would scatter everywhere, and the school district police did not want them coming on campus. While there have been no incidents of bailout-related violence on Uvalde CISD school grounds, there have been examples of high-speed driving that sometimes crossed school parking lots and reports of some bailout incidents involving firearms in the surrounding neighborhoods.[65]

The Committee received evidence that Uvalde CISD employees did not always reliably receive the Raptor alerts. Reasons included poor wi-fi coverage, phones that were turned off or not always carried,[66] and employees who had to log-in on a computer to receive a message.

Uvalde CISD Facilities & Maintenance

Uvalde CISD has a Maintenance & Operations Department overseen by director Rodney Harrison, who testified before the Committee. Harrison expressed his view that Uvalde CISD's buildings are in fairly good shape. To facilitate taking care of each campus, the Maintenance & Operations Department employs 14 full-time employees supplemented by six students employed to help move furniture. Harrison stated that it is difficult to keep his department staffed, and he has recently lost employees to two retirements during the COVID pandemic, one death, and another employee moving away.[67]

Robb Elementary Facilities & Management

Robb Elementary School was built in 1955. Most recently, it served as the primary Uvalde CISD school for students in second through fourth grades.[68] "New" buildings were constructed at the elementary schools, including the west building at Robb, 22 years ago.[69]

Robb Elementary had a new principal beginning with the 2021–22 school year. Principal Mandy Gutierrez has worked for Uvalde CISD for over two decades, starting as a fourth grade

[65] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police, at 30 (June 21, 2022); Committee testimony of Kenneth Mueller (June 16, 2022).

[66] Committee testimony of Kenneth Mueller (June 16, 2022).

[67] Committee testimony of Rodney Harrison, Uvalde CISD Maintenance & Operations Director (June 16, 2022).

[68] The only other option for second to fourth grades is the Uvalde Dual Language Academy. Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022). Uvalde CISD informed the Investigatory Committee that it intends to turn the former Robb Elementary School campus into a park dedicated to the memory of the students and teachers killed in the shooting tragedy. Committee testimony of Dr. Hal Harrell, Uvalde CISD superintendent (June 16, 2022).

[69] Committee testimony of Rodney Harrison, Uvalde CISD Maintenance & Operations Director (June 16, 2022); Committee testimony of Dr. Hal Harrell, Uvalde CISD superintendent (June 16, 2022).

teacher at Robb in 2008. In 2018, she became assistant principal, and she served in that position until becoming the principal in 2021.[70]

Uvalde CISD had assigned two full-time custodians to Robb Elementary.[71] The lead custodian was Jaime Perez.

In 2019, Uvalde CISD received a state-funded grant to upgrade school security. The school district used its funds to add video cameras to various campuses, build a fence surrounding Flores Elementary School, and install magnetic entryways at some campuses.[72]

Policies for Locking Doors

Robb Elementary's principal testified that the school's west building has three exterior doors, two of which policy required to remain locked. Each classroom in the west building had a door to a hallway, which policy required to remain locked at all times.[73] The interior classroom doors also were required to remain closed and locked at all times.[74] The interior doors were solid metal with a small pane of glass and could only be locked from the outside using a key.[75]

The school district's police officers conducted walk-throughs, during which they would check for locked doors.[76] When they found doors unlocked the officers would remind teachers to keep the doors locked, and in the event of repeat offenders, they would document the violations.[77]

Multiple witnesses reported to the Committee that people at Robb Elementary commonly left doors unlocked—as did people at all the other Uvalde CISD schools as well.[78] Teachers would use rocks to prop open exterior doors,[79] and they used door stops, wedges, and magnets to

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[70] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022).

[71] Committee testimony of Rodney Harrison, Uvalde CISD Maintenance & Operations Director (June 16, 2022).

[72] *Id.*

[73] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022); *see also* Committee testimony of Pete Arredondo, Chief of Uvalde CISD Police Department (June 21, 2022) (assumed Rooms 111 and 112 were locked because the policy was for them to be locked at all times, particularly during a lockdown).

[74] Uvalde Consolidated ISD, *Annex 1: Active Shooter* ¶ IV.B.2.r. ("Teachers are instructed to keep their classroom doors closed and locked at all times.").

[75] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022).

[76] *Id.*; Committee testimony of Ruby Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 17, 2022).

[77] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022).

[78] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Ruby Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 17, 2022).

[79] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

prevent interior door locks from latching.[80] Due to a key shortage, Robb Elementary School substitute teachers often were instructed to use the "magnet system" to circumvent the locks in violation of school district policy.[81]

Uvalde CISD Police Officer Adrian Gonzalez testified that when an officer was walking the floors and checking doors, the teachers would notify each other, and they would lock their doors.[82] The officers would speak to the teachers and to their supervisors, and they tried to discourage the use of magnets.[83] Common responses from teachers would include that they did not have a key (particularly in the case of substitute teachers) and that it was just temporary while a child was using the restroom.[84] For some teachers, the inconveniences of keeping up with a key outweighed their perception of the risk of leaving doors unlocked. Other teachers were "rule followers," always locking their doors.

At the time of the incident, all the doors in the building had been recently painted.[85] In March 2022, around spring break, school administrators received a report from the teacher in Room 111 that his classroom door was not always locking.[86] According to numerous witnesses who testified before the Committee, the door to Room 111 could lock, although it took some extra effort, and if the door closed softly it might not lock. But the head custodian at Robb Elementary testified that he never heard about any problems with the doors for Rooms 111 or 112, and if he had, he would have created a work order.[87] Robb Elementary maintenance records confirm the lack of any written work order to repair the door for Rooms 111 or 112 during the 2021–22 school year. Although Uvalde CISD policy required each staff member to

[80] Committee testimony of Ruby Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 17, 2022); Testimony of Rodney Harrison, Uvalde CISD Maintenance and Operations Director (June 16, 2022). Assistant principal Shawna Wolbert, who was not present on campus during the incident, told the Deparment of Public Safety that there was a "magnet system" with magnets provided to substitutes to keep doors from locking. DPS interview of Robb Elementary Assistant Principal Shawna Wolbert (May 28, 2022). Principal Gutierrez said the same thing in her statement to DPS. DPS interview of Robb Elementary Principal Mandy Gutierrez (May 28, 2022).

[81] *See* DPS interviews of Robb Elementary administrators (May 28, 2022); *see also* Uvalde Consolidated ISD, *Annex 1: Active Shooter* ¶ IV.B.2.r. ("Teachers are instructed to keep their classroom doors closed and locked at all times. *Barriers are not to be used. Substitutes shall follow the same policy*, with campuses ensuring they have access to the classrooms they need throughout the day." (emphasis supplied)).

[82] Committee testimony of Adrian Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 20, 2022).

[83] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022); Committee testimony of Ruby Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 17, 2022).

[84] Committee testimony of Ruby Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD police officer (June 17, 2022).

[85] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022); *see also* DPS interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 8, 2022).

[86] *See, e.g.*, Committee investigators' interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 30, 2022).

[87] Committee testimony of Jaime Perez, Robb Elementary head custodian (June 16, 2022).

know the procedures to follow to request repairs for a door that would not lock,[88] Robb Elementary teachers testified to the Committee that instead of requesting a work order themselves, they would call school administrators who were responsible for making the requests.

Maintenance of Doors & Keys

Considering the district's policies about keeping doors locked, it was important that doors and locks be properly maintained. The manufacturer discontinued production of the door locks used at Robb Elementary. While the school district had acquired a supply of key blanks at the time the locks were purchased, that supply was gone by May 2022.[89]

The director of maintenance and operations, Mr. Harrison, testified that people frequently lose, forget, or simply do not want to carry school keys. As a result, the custodians spend a lot of time opening doors. The maintenance and operations department has one employee who specializes in door repairs, but it relies on YouTube instruction videos, online diagrams, and the help of a local locksmith to work on locks. Harrison testified that unless there is a work order notifying his department of a problem, his employees do not regularly check doors.[90]

There were numerous different master keys that worked with different sets of locks at the Robb Elementary School campus. People who had master keys included Harrison, Principal Gutierrez, Assistant Principal Shawna Wolbert, Robb Instructional Coach Rebecca Guzman, Principal Gutierrez's secretary, Janette Martinez, and lead custodian Jaime Perez.[91] Both Uvalde CISD Police Chief Arredondo and Lt. Mike Hernandez possessed a large number of keys to Uvalde CISD buildings. Chief Arredondo kept a number of keys in his car, but he was not sure whether he had master keys for Robb Elementary. He knew he did not have a key to every building, though he testified that he had requested a complete set for himself.[92] Of the over 50 keys that he carried with him, Lt. Hernandez testified that he had a Robb Elementary master

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[88] Uvalde CISD, *Annex 1: Active Shooter* ¶ IV.B.1.b ("Doors to all classrooms will remain locked during instruction … . Each staff member will know the procedures to follow in order to have any door or window repaired that will not lock.").

[89] Committee testimony of Rodney Harrison, Uvalde CISD Maintenance & Operations Director (June 16, 2022).

[90] *Id.*

[91] Committee testimony of Rodney Harrison, Uvalde CISD Maintenance & Operations Director (June 16, 2022); Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022).

[92] Committee testimony of Pete Arredondo, USCID police chief (June 21, 2022).

key that had worked, although sometimes he had to jiggle keys to make them work. Additionally, sometimes staff would change locks without notice to him.[93]

Arnulfo Reyes, the fourth grade teacher in Room 111 stated in an interview that teachers and students in his building widely knew that the door to his classroom frequently did not lock, and he had gotten in "trouble" several times when Uvalde CISD police officers found the door unlocked. He stated that, on multiple occasions, he reported the malfunctioning lock to school administrators, who stated that the request had been turned in. As was the apparent practice among Robb Elementary teachers, Reyes never submitted a work order to repair the door lock for Room 111 himself.[94] Principal Gutierrez, in her testimony, confirmed that school administration knew about the issues with that door, stating that it was reported around spring break of 2022.[95]

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[93] Committee testimony of Lt. Mike Hernandez, Uvalde CISD Police (June 17, 2022). Lt. Hernandez's keys were sent into the west building in response to the request for a master key during the May 24, 2022, incident, but officers inside the building were unable to identify the correct key from among the dozens of keys on his key rings.

[94] DPS interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 8, 2022).

[95] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022).

4 | The Attacker

One motive that drove the man behind the massacre at Robb Elementary School was a desire for notoriety and fame. The Committee refuses to perpetuate his memory in that way; our focus is to ensure that Texas never forgets the children and beloved teachers who have been lost and the lessons this tragedy can teach. So, instead of naming him, we call him by a generic term used in active shooter training: "the attacker." In consultation with the local community in Uvalde, the Committee arranged to show victims' families, in advance of public release, a prudently edited version of Robb Elementary's hallway surveillance video that did not include images of him.[96] We regret that others, under cover of anonymity and for their own motives, have sensationalized evidence of this horrible tragedy at the risk of glorifying a monster.[97]

Family & Early Life

The attacker was born in Fargo, North Dakota on May 16, 2004, the second child born to the mother, Uvalde native A.R., and her then-boyfriend, S.R. The couple split shortly after the attacker's birth, and A.R. returned to Uvalde with the two children. The father had limited and inconsistent involvement in his children's lives from that point onward.[98]

Mother A.R. was known to several witnesses who testified before the Committee from her work as a server at local Uvalde restaurants. A.R. was involved in the attacker's early life, but over time, her relationship with both her children became strained.[99] A.R. struggled with a long history of drug use and other personal issues, though her only criminal history was a 2005 misdemeanor theft that ended in probation and a dismissed 2007 charge of misdemeanor family-violence assault.[100] The FBI interviewed a former girlfriend of the attacker who

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[96] The Committee incorporates into its report, by reference, the edited videorecording of the May 24, 2022, law enforcement response at Robb Elementary uploaded at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vYjDc5sDZyU. This video is considered part of this report.

[97] Tragically, there is evidence that national media coverage of mass shootings has played a role in increasing their frequency. *See generally* https://www.dontnamethem.org/.

[98] The evidence shared by other law enforcement agencies includes the attacker's birth certificate and school records as well as notes from interviews of both of his parents.

[99] In addition to various interviews of family members conducted by law enforcement agencies in the wake of the Robb Elementary tragedy, the Committee heard testimony from an aunt and a cousin of the attacker. Also, the Committee learned many details in this section from a review of the attacker's mobile phones and cloud-based data storage, which were imaged by law enforcement and provided to the Committee.

[100] Records of the mother's criminal history were provided to the Committee.

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believed one of A.R.'s boyfriends sexually assaulted him at an early age, but that A.R. didn't believe his outcry.[101]

The attacker and his family had some support from extended family, most notably A.R.'s mother, C.G. Testimony before the Committee portrayed C.G. as well-known and well-regarded in the Uvalde community, particularly within the local school district, from which she retired after twenty-seven years. C.G. took on the role of a maternal figure in the lives of both the attacker and his sister, especially as they grew older.

Relatives described the attacker as shy and quiet. The Committee heard testimony that he was reluctant to interact with peers because of a speech impediment. Poverty is not an unfamiliar circumstance in Uvalde—86% of the children in the school district may be economically disadvantaged.[102] The attacker often wore the same clothing day after day.

S c h o o l

Records from the attacker's early school years reveal varied accounts of his character and school performance. His pre-K teacher's report described him as "a pleasure to have … a wonderful student … always ready to learn," and it praised his "hard work and positive attitude in the classroom." Yet early assessments showed he was behind other students academically, and by third grade, school officials already had identified him as "at-risk" due to consistently poor test results. School records reveal that someone may have requested speech therapy for the attacker, and his later internet searches show he himself sought information on dyslexia. Ultimately, he received no special education services.[103]

The attacker's fourth grade year at Robb Elementary School was significant to him. The shooting took place in his former fourth grade classroom, and he discussed bad memories of fourth grade with an acquaintance just weeks beforehand. In testimony before the Committee, two different narratives have emerged.

The attacker's fourth grade teacher testified before the Committee. Not only did she know the attacker from having been his teacher, but she was also in Robb Elementary's fourth grade building, in a different classroom, at the time of the attack. This teacher told the Committee she knew the attacker needed extra help in her class because he claimed to be a victim of bullying. She testified that she met with the attacker's mother, A.R., over the mother's concerns about bullying, and that she had promised A.R. that her son would have a good fourth grade

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[101] FBI San Antonio, Situational Report (May 30, 2022) (SITREP #11, final SITREP).

[102] Committee testimony of Dr. Becky Reinhardt, Uvalde CISD (June 30, 2022).

[103] *Id.*

year. According to the teacher, it was a good year for the attacker. She said she believed her classroom was a safe place for him and that he made friends there.

Members of the attacker's family, however, reported to the Committee their belief that other students still bullied the attacker throughout his fourth grade school year over his stutter, clothing, and short haircut. A cousin of the attacker said she was in the same fourth grade class with him, and she corroborated this version of his experience that year. She reported an incident in which another girl in the class tied the attacker's shoelaces together, resulting in him falling over and injuring his face. The family also reported their belief that some teachers also picked on the attacker and his cousin.

Despite the accounts that suggest bullying of the attacker had become a concern by the fourth grade, in notes found on his phone, he described them as beginning in middle school. It is not known to the Committee whether the attacker ever shared these notes with anybody.

Records show the attacker had declining attendance, with more than one hundred absences annually beginning in 2018, along with failing grades and increasingly dismal performance on standardized and end-of-course exams. While Uvalde CISD "school success officers" do try to bring truant children back to school, many Uvalde students have spotty attendance, and the local judicial system reportedly does not consistently enforce truancy rules.[104] It is unclear whether any school resource officers ever visited the home of the attacker.

Despite his absences, or perhaps because of them, the attacker had almost no disciplinary history at school. The single infraction on his school record is for "mutual combat" with another student in a hallway in late 2018, resulting in a three-day suspension.

By 2021, at age seventeen, the attacker had only completed the ninth grade. On October 28, 2021, Uvalde High School involuntarily withdrew him, citing poor academic performance and lack of attendance.[105]

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[104] Id.

[105] There has been some public reference to a Uvalde High School teacher, identified in FBI investigative reports as Rhiannon Bates, who was identified by yet another teacher as having purportedly stated in the past that the attacker was the one student of whom she was afraid, and that "if any student was going to become a school shooter, it would be him." FBI San Antonio, Situational Report (May 30, 2022) (SITREP #11, final SITREP). The Committee's investigators interviewed Ms. Bates, and she categorically denies this account, specifically denying any knowledge about the attacker. In her testimony to the Committee, Uvalde CISD administrator Dr. Becky Reinhardt confirmed that the attacker had not been one of Bates's students, and there is no indication that she ever had any interaction with him. Committee testimony of Dr. Becky Reinhardt, Uvalde CISD (June 30, 2022).

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In a year distinguished by the general school-age population's return to school in Uvalde and elsewhere after the COVID pandemic, the attacker dropped out of school and turned down a dark path. While in earlier years, notes in his phone reflect that he unsuccessfully sought to fit in (including a fixation with weight and fitness that resulted in an eating disorder), in 2021 he appears to have increasingly withdrew and isolated himself.

An ex-boyfriend of his mother A.R. described the attacker to an investigating Texas Ranger as a loner who punched holes in the walls of his room after arguments with her. By this time the attacker's sister already had graduated and left home, and his best (perhaps only) friend was living in San Antonio. The attacker had no driver's license or vehicle. Family members told the Committee and other investigators that a group of the attacker's former friends "jumped" him early in the year. The attacker began trying to teach himself boxing and mixed martial arts with a punching bag in his room at home.

In mid-2021, his relationship with the girlfriend later interviewed by the FBI ended. She described the attacker as lonely and depressed, constantly teased by friends who called him a "school shooter." She said he told her repeatedly that he wouldn't live past eighteen, either because he would commit suicide or simply because he "wouldn't live long."[106] The attacker responded to the breakup by harassing the girl and her friends.

The attacker began wearing black clothes, combat boots, and long, unkempt hair. He was active on several social media platforms, including TikTok, Instagram, YouTube, and the French livestreaming platform Yubo. He networked with local peers in ongoing group chats on Snapchat, and he played a range of videogames, including the Call of Duty and Grand Theft Auto series. Most of his usernames and even his email address reflected themes of confrontation and revenge.

The attacker began to demonstrate interest in gore and violent sex, watching and sometimes sharing gruesome videos and images of suicides, beheadings, accidents, and the like, as well as sending unexpected explicit messages to others online. Those with whom he played videogames reported that he became enraged when he lost. He made over-the-top threats, especially towards female players, whom he would terrorize with graphic descriptions of violence and rape.

His online interactions grew more manipulative and controlling as the year wore on, and he presented a more commanding personality online than he did in person. He pretended to a

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[106] FBI San Antonio, Situational Report (May 30, 2022) (SITREP #11, final SITREP).

greater level of maturity than he had, searching the internet for information on sexual practices mentioned by others in conversation. The attacker wrote about his difficulty connecting to other people or feeling empathy for them; he said he was "not human," and he called others "humans," apparently intending it as an insult. Later internet usage suggests he may have wondered if he was a sociopath and sought out information on the condition. His internet research resulted in him receiving an email about obtaining psychological treatment for sociopathy.

The attacker became focused on achieving notoriety. He believed his TikTok and YouTube channels would be successful. The small number of views he received led him to tell those with whom he interacted that he was "famous," that they were mere "randoms" by comparison, and that they were lucky to interact with him.

On Yubo, the attacker spoke enviously of publicity given to a murderer and animal abuser whose story became widely known after a Netflix documentary. In late 2021, he shared a video online that showed him driving around with "someone he met on the internet" holding a clear plastic bag that contained a dead cat, which he discarded in the street and spit on while his driver laughed. The video then showed the attacker wearing a tactical plate carrier, went on to show him dryfiring BB guns at people, and ended with footage of emergency services responding to a serious car accident, which he claimed his driver had caused.

The attacker got a job in late 2021. He first worked at Whataburger, where a friend's grandmother saw him. She snapped a picture and sent it to her grandson, warning that it was "an example of what your life will be if you quit school"—a sentiment some of his peers expressed to him directly. His employer fired him after a month for threatening a female coworker, and he fared similarly at his next job at Wendy's. A coworker there described him as "not a good person" and "troubled," someone who "put himself in a box and would not talk or associate with anyone he worked with." An exception to that approach was when he tried discussing guns with another employee. When the other employee received the discussion negatively, the attacker challenged him to a fight. The attacker also occasionally worked with his grandfather, who had an air conditioning business and paid him in cash.

Living at home, the attacker had no real expenses and hoarded money, telling acquaintances that he was "saving for something big" and that they would all see him in the news one day. Family members believed he was saving money for his own apartment or car, but clues to his real plans surfaced near the end of 2021. That is when he ordered rifle slings, a red dot sight, and shin guards, as well as the body armor carrier worn in both the video he shared and on the day of the Robb Elementary massacre. Still seventeen at the time, the attacker asked at

least two different people to buy guns for him,[107] which they both refused to do. Interviews conducted by other investigators indicate that family members and friends were aware of his efforts to buy guns before he was legally permitted to do so.

Finally, the attacker developed a fascination with school shootings, of which he made no secret. His comments about them coupled with his wild threats of violence and rape earned him the nickname "Yubo's school shooter" on that platform. Those with whom he played games taunted him with a similar nickname so often that it became a running joke. Even those he personally knew in his local chat group began calling him "the school shooter" after he shared pictures of himself wearing the plate carrier he'd bought and posing with a BB gun he tried to convince them was real. None of his online behavior was ever reported to law enforcement, and if it was reported by other users to any social media platform, it does not appear that actions were taken to restrict his access or to report him to authorities as a threat.

The Last Days

While a vague idea for a school shooting appears to have been in the attacker's mind as early as late 2021, he began to pursue his evil plan in early 2022 after a falling-out with his mother. A blowout argument between them was livestreamed on Instagram, and several members of their family viewed it. Although sheriff's deputies responded to a call, they made no arrests. Soon afterwards, the attacker left home and moved in with his grandmother, just blocks away from Robb Elementary School.

His relationship with his mother never improved. He retained similar antipathy toward his father, who last saw him about a month before the shooting. The father felt his son had no love left for him. He noticed that the attacker had cuts on his own face that appeared to be self-inflicted (something other witnesses had observed on prior occasions), and he claimed he was "doing something" soon.

The attacker had moved into his grandmother's small home, where he had no room of his own and slept on the living-room floor. A few days before the shooting, he confided in an older cousin who was also staying there, telling her that he did not want to live anymore. After

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[107] The straw purchase of a firearm as proposed by the attacker would violate federal law. *See* 18 U.S.C. § 922(a)(6) ("It shall be unlawful— for any person in connection with the acquisition or attempted acquisition of any firearm or ammunition from a … licensed manufacturer, [or] licensed dealer … knowingly to make any false or fictitious oral or written statement or to furnish or exhibit any false, fictitious, or misrepresented identification, intended or likely to deceive such … manufacturer, [or] dealer … with respect to any fact material to the lawfulness of the sale … under the provisions of this chapter"). Additionally, Texas law provides that "A person commits an offense if the person … intentionally or knowingly sells, rents, leases, or gives or offers to sell, rent, lease, or give to any child younger than 18 years of age any firearm … ." Tex. Pen. Code § 46.06(a)(2).

a lengthy heart-to-heart, the cousin believed she'd gotten through to him. The attacker's uncle also recalled having similar discussions with him.

Meanwhile, the attacker's planning and preparation became more focused. The Committee received extensive documentation compiled and created by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in the course of its investigation of the attacker's purchases. He began buying more firearms accessories beginning in February 2022, including 60 30-round magazines, a holographic weapon sight, and a Hellfire Gen 2 snap-on trigger system.

On March 23, 2022, a suspicious person dressed in all black with a backpack was seen canvasing Robb Elementary, but no one ever identified the person.

As soon as the attacker turned eighteen on May 16, 2022—just one week before the shooting on May 24, 2022—he was finally able to purchase guns and ammunition. An online retailer shipped 1,740 rounds of 5.56mm 75-grain boat tail hollow point to his doorstep, at a cost of $1,761.50. He ordered a Daniel Defense DDM4 V7 (an AR-15-style rifle) for shipment to a gun store in Uvalde, at a cost of $2,054.28 (including tax and transfer fee). On May 17, 2022, he bought a Smith and Wesson M&P15 (also an AR-15-style rifle) at the same store in Uvalde, at a cost of $1,081.42. He returned the next day for 375 rounds of M193, a 5.56mm 55-grain round with a full metal jacket, which has a soft core surrounded by a harder metal. He returned again to pick up his other rifle when it arrived on May 20, 2022, and he had store staff install the holographic sight on it after the transfer was completed.[108]

The attacker's rifles; the leftmost was used at Robb.

The owner of the gun store described the attacker as an "average customer with no 'red flags' or suspicious conditions"—just that he was always alone and quiet. The owner of the store remembered asking how an 18-year-old could afford such purchases (the rifles alone were over $3,000), and the attacker simply said he had saved up. Patrons of the store who saw him told

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[108] The exact cost of all magazines, sights, and other accessories in addition to the amounts listed above likely ranged from $1,500–2,000 based on market value and the amounts the attacker reported to those he told about the purchases.

a different story in FBI interviews, saying after the tragedy that the attacker was "very nervous looking" and that he "appeared odd and looked like one of those school shooters"; another described his all-black clothing as simply giving off "bad vibes."

A background check was conducted, and the attacker qualified for the purchases. While multiple gun sales within such a short period are and were reported to the ATF, the law only requires purchases of handguns to be reported to the local sheriff. Here, the information about the attacker's gun purchases remained in federal hands.

The attacker's uncle drove him to the gun store twice. He said he did not know they were going to pick up a rifle the first time; the store is connected to a popular restaurant, and the attacker said he was hungry. When he returned with a long box and no food, it was obvious he had purchased a rifle. The Committee has not learned who took the attacker to the gun store on May 18th, but the uncle drove him back on May 20th after the attacker falsely told him he needed to pick up ammunition purchased online. The uncle said he did not see what was in the attacker's package, and he was too unfamiliar with firearms to know what might have been inside. It is now known that the package contained the second, more expensive rifle used in the shooting.

The attacker's grandmother and cousin both told him he could not have a gun in the home, so the uncle agreed to store the first rifle at his house. He believes the attacker snuck it out after staying the night a few days later. The attacker apparently hid the second rifle outside his grandmother's house until he brought it in the night before the shooting, as he related to an acquaintance by text messages.

The attacker had no experience with firearms, and based on other investigators' interviews of friends and family, the shooting was likely the first time he fired one. The uncle recalled the attacker attempting to seat a magazine in the rifle and the magazine repeatedly falling out onto the floor. Internet search history shows the attacker sought out ranges but was unable to get to one that allowed long guns before the shooting. He also searched the internet for basic information such as what kind of ammunition an AR-15 fires and whether a magazine can be reused after being emptied, and he looked for information on how to buy "juggernaut armor," a fictional armor system depicted in videogames.

Online interactions involving the attacker continued to foreshadow a tragedy. In March 2022, in an Instagram group conversation, a student told him that "people at school talk [expletive] about you and call you school shooter." Later, the attacker began referencing a timeline. On April 2nd, he asked in a direct message on Instagram, "Are you still gonna remember me in 50 something days ?" After the answer, "probably not 🧑," he retorted with, "Hmm alright

we'll see in may 👍." The attacker often connected those dates with doing something that would make him famous and put him "all over the news," and many of those with whom he chatted suspected his cryptic deadlines meant violence. For example, in a May 14th conversation he simply wrote "10 more days," leading to immediate speculation that he meant he'd "shoot up a school or something" or commit "mass murder" on that date. On May 17th, a friend told him that an acquaintance of theirs was "telling everyone u shooting up the school."

The attacker also began sharing photos of his rifles, including with total strangers. Those in his Snapchat group claimed they believed the guns were fake (despite the attacker posting the receipt) because he had tried to pass off a BB gun as real the year before. For those with no reason for doubts, the context often made the shared images disturbing, such in late April when a friend proposed visiting the attacker in Uvalde:

> Imma prolly go out to uvalde in the summer we should link

> Damn why you coming here

> If it's before may 23rd I'm down

> To visit you

> If i get a car by then

> Prolly go in july or august

> Damn that's too late

> I'm about to get 2 ars

> Wanna see

> Yuhh
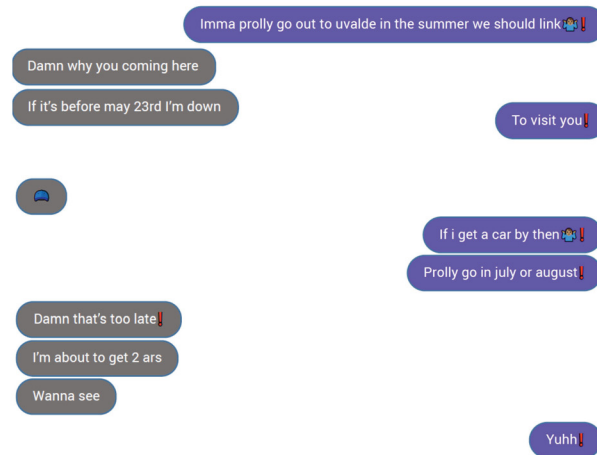
After the attacker sent a picture of the rifle he intended to buy—to great approval—their discussion continued just after his birthday when he made his first gun and ammo purchases:

> Just spent 1652 on ammo

> and 2150on some ar

> Smhh 💀❗

> 😋

> Givin me school shooter vibes

In the last days before the shooting, the attacker saved news stories and other information about the mass shooting in a Buffalo, N.Y. supermarket on May 19, 2022. He also spent time with his cousin's son, who attended Robb Elementary. After playing the children's videogame Roblox, the attacker elicited from him details about his schedule and how lunch periods worked at the school.

On the eve of the shooting, the attacker began contacting numerous people with vague but ominous messages about doing something the next day. In one Snapchat exchange with a German teenager he had befriended, he commented: "I got a lil secret 😵 😋." When she became curious, he told her it was "impossible for today" because he was still waiting for something "being delivered Monday 23 by 7 pm." His order of 1,740 hollow points arrived later that day.

Prior to the shooting, the attacker had no criminal history and had never been arrested. He is not known to have espoused any ideology or political views of any kind. Private individuals alone knew the many warning signals.

5 | MAY 24 INCIDENT & LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE

May 24, 2022, marked the beginning of the end of the 2022 school year at Robb Elementary School. Parents, teachers, and students came to school that day ready to celebrate the students' accomplishments and awards and to look forward to another peaceful Uvalde summer. The students had completed all their tests and school instruction was over for the year. It was awards day, and parents were coming to school to see their children's ceremonies. Many students anticipated going home early or remaining with their classmates to watch a movie.

In a nearby neighborhood, a former Robb Elementary student and Uvalde High School dropout had made other grim plans for that now-fateful day. In private messages, the Robb Elementary School attacker had indicated to acquaintances that he had chosen this date in advance for a significant event. Some in the Uvalde community have speculated that the attacker intended to choose the date when, carrying out a local tradition, the Class of 2022 seniors would return to Robb Elementary to walk the halls at lunchtime. If the attacker's former classmates were his intended targets, they were spared because the seniors' visit occurred on May 23, 2022, the day before the tragic attack.

The attacker was at home with his grandparents on the morning of May 24th when he sent eerie online messages, including to an Instagram model he'd never met whom he had tagged in pictures of his guns the week before. "I'll text you in an hour," he wrote, "But you HAVE TO RESPOND. I got a lil secret. I wanna tell u 😊."

Evidence shows that the attacker had been getting in increasing conflicts with his grandmother, and she had threatened to remove him from her mobile phone plan. On the morning of May 24th, she called customer service to do just that. After a nearly hour-long FaceTime conversation with his online acquaintance in Germany, the attacker began texting her live updates:

While these text messages have been circulated in media reports, those reports do not include a message deleted by the attacker's correspondent before the screenshot was taken. Just twenty-eight seconds after the attacker informed her that he
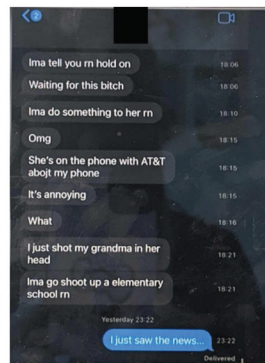
had shot his grandmother and intended to "shoot up" an elementary school, the German teenager replied with a single word: "Cool."[109]

The attacker actually did shoot his grandmother in her face. Despite not having a driver's license, he then proceeded to steal her truck, abandoning her to seek help from a neighbor as he set out to complete his plan.

Driving toward Robb Elementary on South Grove Street, the attacker apparently lost control of the truck while approaching Geraldine Street, crashing the vehicle into a ditch.

Truck crashed by attacker near Robb Elementary.

Surveillance cameras at the nearby Hillcrest Memorial Funeral Home captured the crash on video at approximately 11:28 a.m. Two men saw the crash and began to walk from the funeral home, across Geraldine Street, to the location of the truck. The attacker emerged from the wreckage and began shooting toward the two men, who turned and fled back toward the funeral home. Immediately, a report was made to 911 about a man at that location shooting a gun.

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[109] The above depiction of the text messages is one that has been posted by news outlets—an image of the teenager's phone taken after the shooting. The Committee reviewed data from the attacker's phones, which contained an additional message that appears to have been deleted in the image shared by the teenager.
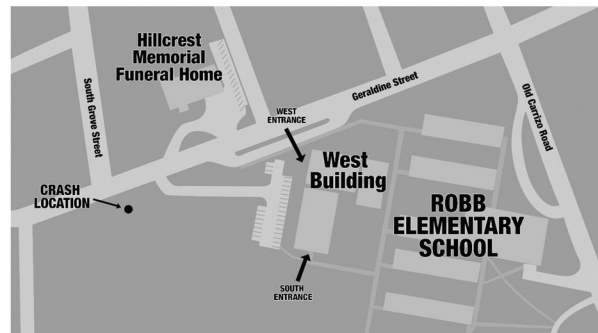
Robb elementary and surroundings.

The attacker proceeded to advance toward Robb Elementary School. There was a five-foot fence around the perimeter of the school property. The attacker tossed a backpack over the fence, then he climbed over it, as documented on the funeral home's surveillance camera.

Coach Silva Alerts the School

Robb Elementary Coach Yvette Silva was outdoors at that time with a group of third graders, and she spotted the backpack being tossed over the fence followed by a person dressed in black climbing over it. She then saw the person raise a gun and begin to shoot. Coach Silva thought the attacker was shooting at her, and she ran from the field toward her classroom. She used her school radio to report: "Coach Silva to office, somebody just jumped over the fence and he's shooting." She ran toward a group of third graders on the school playground to tell them to lock down. She expected to then hear an announcement of a lockdown, but she did not hear one right away.[110] Meanwhile, the attacker proceeded to the fourth grade teachers' parking lot, continuing to fire his gun.

Law Enforcement Responds to Robb Elementary

While this was unfolding, Uvalde Police Department dispatch communicated to local law enforcement the initial 911 report from the funeral home about the vehicle crash. Numerous officers immediately began to respond in the direction of Robb Elementary School.

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[110] Committee testimony of Coach Yvette Silva, Robb Elementary (June 16, 2022).

Uvalde Police SSgt. Eduardo Canales, commander of the SWAT team, had been at Robb Elementary just an hour before for his son's end-of-year school ceremonies. While working at his office, other officers ran down the hallway and said there had been a vehicle accident with shots fired. He followed Lt. Mariano Pargas, the acting chief of the Uvalde Police. (Uvalde Police Chief Daniel Rodriguez was out of town that day, and on this occasion, Lt. Pargas had been designated as acting chief.) On arrival at the school, SSgt. Canales saw cars stopped and a man shooting a gun. He grabbed his rifle, put a magazine into it, and grabbed an extra magazine. He saw people at the funeral home pointing in the direction of the school, and he heard somebody say the attacker was in or near the building. SSgt. Canales entered an open gate where he met Lt. Javier Martinez, also of the Uvalde Police.[111]

Lt. Martinez also heard the report of a vehicle accident with shots fired. He drove toward the intersection of Geraldine and South Grove, and as he arrived, he saw a man on the side of the road pointing. He jumped out of his car, popped the trunk to get his vest, then proceeded toward the west side of the school's west building.[112]

At around the same time, another Uvalde Police officer, Sgt. Daniel Coronado, also arrived on the scene. He wore his uniform and a vest, but he had no rifle plates for protection. Sgt. Coronado first stopped his patrol vehicle at the south end of South Grove Street where it dead-ends into Geraldine Street. He saw two Uvalde Police officers at the intersection who had arrived before him. Sgt. Coronado exited his vehicle, heard gunfire, and asked where the shooting was occurring. At first, the other officers said they did not know, and they could not see the attacker.[113]

One of those officers testified to the Committee that, based on the sound of echoes, he believed the shooter had fired in their direction.[114] That officer saw children dressed in bright colors in the playground, all running away. Then, at a distance exceeding 100 yards, he saw a person dressed in black, also running away. Thinking that the person dressed in black was the attacker, he raised his rifle and asked Sgt. Coronado for permission to shoot.[115]

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[111] Committee testimony of SSgt. Eduardo Canales, Uvalde Police (June 29, 2022).

[112] Committee testimony of Lt. Javier Martinez, Uvalde Police (June 29, 2022).

[113] Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police (June 20, 2022).

[114] The Committee is unaware of any public reporting about this episode that has identified the police officer by name. The officer testified before the Committee. In light of the Committee's determination that the description of this episode by ALERRT—then widely reported by the media—is likely incorrect, we likewise decline to identify him by name for purposes of this report.

[115] *See, e.g.,* Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police (June 20, 2022).

Sgt. Coronado testified he heard the request, and he hesitated. He knew there were children present. He considered the risk of shooting a child, and he quickly recalled his training that officers are responsible for every round that goes downrange.[116]

According to the officer who made the request, there was no opportunity for Sgt. Coronado to respond before they heard on the radio that the attacker was running toward the school. The officers testified to the Committee that it turned out that the person they had seen dressed in black was not the attacker, but instead it was Robb Elementary Coach Abraham Gonzales.[117] Coach Gonzales had been on his way to the parking lot to leave the school after his lunch duty when he heard a gunshot and then Coach Garcia's report about the attacker over the radio. He told the children around him to run away.[118] Robb Elementary fourth grade teachers Lynn

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[116] *Id.*

[117] Part 1 of the ALERRT report, included the following narrative in its timeline:

> Prior to the suspect's entry into the building at 11:33:00, according to statements, a Uvalde Police Officer on scene at the crash site observed the suspect carrying a rifle outside the west hall entry. The officer, armed with a rifle, asked his supervisor for permission to shoot the suspect. However, the supervisor either did not hear or responded too late. The officer turned to get confirmation from his supervisor and when he turned back to address the suspect, he had entered the west hallway unabated. (OS per investigating officer interview).

ALERRT, *Robb Elementary School Attack Response Assessment and Recommendations*, at 4 (July 6, 2022). The ALERRT report appears to rely on an interview conducted by Texas Ranger Michael Schraub, who interviewed the officer in question on May 27, 2022. That report stated:

> While in route to the scene Officer [A] advised Officer [B] located the shooter. However, the shooter was located a couple blocks away from the dispatch location. Officer [A] advised upon arrival, the shooter was shooting at Officer [B]. Officer [A] advised he positioned his patrol vehicle while ducking down and grabbing his rifle between the shooter and Officer [B]. Officer [A] advised the purpose was to protect Officer [B] while he exited his patrol vehicle. Officer [A] advised his vehicle was not struck by any projectiles.
>
> Officer [A] advised upon exiting his patrol vehicle he observed the shooter in the distance. When he observed the shooter, Officer [A] advised there were kids in the background. Therefore, Officer [A] advised he hesitated shooting at the suspect. Officer [A] advised he requested permission to shoot, looked back very briefly at Sergeant Coronado, but never received a response. Upon looking back the direction of the shooter Officer [A] advised the shooter was gone.

DPS interview (May 27, 2022). In a subsequent DPS interview, the officer in question described the person he saw not as "the shooter" but as "a person in black toward the back of the school, but kids were behind that individual." DPS interview (June 13, 2022). These DPS interview reports do not include or support the detail suggested in the ALERRT report that a Uvalde police officer "observed the suspect carrying a rifle *outside the west hall entry.*" Based on its review of evidence to date, this Committee concludes that it is more likely that the officer saw Coach Gonzales dressed in black near a group of schoolchildren than that there was an actual opportunity to shoot the attacker from over 100 yards away, as assumed by ALERRT's partial report.

[118] DPS interview of Coach Abraham Gonzales (May 28, 2022).

Deming and Sasha Martinez each testified that Coach Gonzales yelled at their children to lock down as the attacker approached.[119]

Sgt. Coronado saw people at the funeral home also indicating the attacker was running toward the school. He returned to his car and drove east down Geraldine Street to attempt to flank and engage the attacker. He parked his car on the northeast corner of the campus and saw Uvalde CISD Police Chief Pete Arredondo arrive.[120]

Just minutes before, Chief Arredondo had been in his office at Uvalde High School when he heard "shots fired" on the radio. He rushed out, heard something about Robb Elementary School, and drove toward the school. He arrived with his radios, but as he exited his vehicle, he was fumbling with them and they bothered him, so he dropped them by the school fence knowing that Sgt. Coronado, the sergeant on patrol, was there and "fully uniformed" with his radio.[121]

Robb Elementary School Locks Down

As the attacker approached the school and as law enforcement responders were arriving, staff at Robb Elementary were beginning to lock down, based mostly on word-of-mouth reports of an armed man on campus.

Principal Mandy Gutierrez had just finished an awards ceremony and was in her office when she heard Coach Silva's report over the radio. She attempted to initiate a lockdown on the Raptor application, but she had difficulty making the alert because of a bad wi-fi signal.[122] She did not attempt to communicate the lockdown alert over the school's intercom. By phone, she called and spoke with Chief Arredondo, who told her, "shut it down Mandy, shut it down."[123] She told head custodian Jaime Perez to ensure that all the doors were locked. She initially locked down in her own office, but she later moved to the cafeteria.[124]

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[119] Committee testimony of Lynn Deming, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022); Committee testimony of Sasha Martinez, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022).

[120] Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police (June 20, 2022).

[121] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[122] DPS interview of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (May 27, 2022).

[123] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022). Chief Arredondo told the Committee he had no recollection of talking to Principal Gutierrez. Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police, at 161 (June 21, 2022).

[124] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022).

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Perez was in the cafeteria when he also heard Coach Silva's report on the radio. He immediately started to implement a lockdown, starting to lock doors from the outside. He heard shots and returned to the cafeteria where he remained for the duration of the incident.[125]

In the west building, the fourth grade teachers in and around the building also started to initiate lockdown procedures upon hearing about the approaching attacker. Sasha Martinez taught a fourth grade class in Room 110. She and her class had left their classroom ahead of schedule for recess. They were on their way to the playground when they heard a coach yelling, pointing at the roof, and telling them to run. Martinez started to hear gunshots, and her students started running, some toward the cafeteria, others joining her toward the direction of their classroom in the west building. She then decided to take them to another open classroom in another building instead.[126]

Lynn Deming in Room 104 was getting her class ready to go early to recess. She was standing at the south door of the west building waiting for a child to get a water bottle when her students heading out the south door reported that a coach was yelling at them. She heard "pow pow" and told her kids to get back into the classroom.[127]

Elsa Avila taught fourth grade in Room 109. She had lined-up her students at 11:30 a.m. to go to recess. Some of the children reported to her that students from Deming's classroom were returning screaming and crying. She opened the door and did not see anybody, but she heard a female voice saying, "get in your rooms." She returned to her classroom and slammed the door shut, because otherwise the lock would not latch. She turned off the lights and closed the door. Her students knew what to do—they positioned themselves away from the windows and the doors.[128]

Nicole Ogburn, the fourth grade teacher in Room 102 at the southwest corner of the west building, heard a sound like metal on brick from the outside. She looked out her window and saw a man in dark clothes with a gun and a bag walking up the sidewalk. She told her students to get down. She heard shots coming from the outside into the window, and she hid underneath a curtain in the room.[129]

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[125] Committee testimony of Jaime Perez, Robb Elementary head custodian (June 16, 2022).

[126] Committee testimony of Sasha Martinez, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022). Martinez commented that she thought a lot of time passed between hearing gunshots and then later receiving the Raptor alert. *Id.*

[127] Committee testimony of Lynn Deming, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022).

[128] Committee testimony of Elsa Avila, Robb Elementary teacher (June 30, 2022).

[129] Committee testimony of Nicole Ogburn, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022).

In Room 105, fourth grade teacher Jennieka Rodriguez received a Raptor alert of a lockdown at 11:32 a.m. Her students knew what to do and where to hide. She stepped outside and checked her classroom door to ensure it was locked. As she did so, she looked across the hall and locked eyes with another fourth grade teacher, Ms. Garcia, who was locking the door to her classroom, Room 112.[130]

The Attacker Enters the West Building

After walking north along the west side of the west building, as observed by Ms. Ogburn,[131] the attacker entered the unlocked west door of the west building.[132] The exterior doors on the east and south sides of the building also were unlocked, such that even if the west door had been locked, the attacker still would have had the ability to enter the building, but his progress likely would have been slowed.

After passing through the west door, the attacker walked east into the building, then turned to his right, south into a hallway. He proceeded down to the vestibule for Rooms 111 and 112 and turned left to face those classroom doors.

The Attacker Enters Rooms 111 & 112

The surveillance video in the hallway shows that the attacker fired his gun toward Rooms 111 and 112 at approximately 11:33 a.m. He walked forward toward the doors and could be seen stepping back into the hallway before proceeding again into one of the classrooms.

We cannot be certain which of the doors the attacker entered. But, based on the evidence available to the Committee, it is most likely that the attacker found the door to Room 111 unlocked or unsecured and entered through that door.[133] There is no evidence that the attacker

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[130] Committee testimony of Jennieka Rodriguez, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022).

[131] Committee testimony of Nicole Ogburn, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022).

[132] The Committee received some evidence that this door was usually kept locked, as it was supposed to be. Committee investigator interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 30, 2022). The Committee also heard some evidence that staff often propped open the door with a rock so that teachers could run out and come back in. *See, e.g.,* Committee testimony of Nicole Ogburn, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022). The surveillance camera inside the west building recorded that someone had propped open the west door with a rock earlier on May 24. *See* Robb Elementary surveillance video. Apparently in response to the lockdown alert, a teacher came into the hallway and removed the rock. *Id.* When the attacker arrived, the door was not propped open by a rock—but because the door was unlocked, he was still able to open the door and enter the building. *Id.*

[133] As discussed later in this report, responding officers assumed, but did not verify, that the doors to Rooms 111 and 112 were locked because of school policies and door designs intended to ensure locked classroom doors. Acting on that assumption, officers spent a great amount of time seeking a master key that could open a door they presumed to be locked. Other information described in this report casts doubt on the suggestion the door

made a forced entry through either door. As noted previously, there is evidence that Ms. Garcia, a teacher in Room 112, locked her classroom door as witnessed by the teacher in Room 105 across the hall, Ms. Rodriguez.[134]

As for Room 111, there was substantial evidence that door did not secure properly, The teacher in Room 111, Arnulfo Reyes, knew this, and on several occasions reported the condition of the door to the school.[135] There was also evidence that teachers and students throughout the fourth grade knew the condition of Room 111's door, as they regularly would enter the door to access the printer in that room.[136] Reyes has no recollection of ever receiving a lockdown alert[137] or any memory that he undertook the special effort needed to get his classroom door to lock before the arrival of the attacker.[138]

According to an analysis provided to the Committee, after entering the attacker spent about 2½ minutes rapidly firing over 100 rounds between the two rooms,[139] ultimately killing many innocent victims.[140] Law enforcement discovered a Hellfire trigger system in the room with the attacker, but based on the evidence provided to date, the Committee is unable to determine whether it was used to increase the weapon's rate of firing. The Department of Public Safety

was actually locked. The Committee has been advised that none of the Border Patrol agents who used a key and ultimately opened the door were wearing body cameras which might have shed additional light on this question.

[134] Committee testimony of Jennieka Rodriguez, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022). One of the surviving students in Room 112 also reported that she saw Ms. Garcia lock the door. DPS interview of Khloie Torres (June 2, 2022).

[135] Committee testimony of Mandy Gutierrez, Robb Elementary Principal (June 16, 2022); *see also* interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 30, 2022).

[136] Committee testimony of Nicole Ogburn, Robb Elementary teacher (June 29, 2022); *see also* interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 30, 2022).

[137] DPS (Elizondo) interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 8, 2022).

[138] *E.g.*, DPS (Williamson/Benitez) interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (May 27, 2022). Reyes told the Committee's investigators that he believes the attacker entered through Room 112 and from there shot through the wall into Room 111. Interview of Arnulfo Reyes, Robb Elementary teacher (June 30, 2022). The Committee finds that suggestion to be unlikely for the reasons previously explained about why Room 112 likely was locked and Room 111 likely was unlocked. It is more likely, and otherwise consistent with his account, that Reyes heard bullets fired by the attacker from outside in the hallway, through the doors, and into Room 111.

[139] *Cf.* Texas Department of Public Safety (@TexasDPS), https://twitter.com/TxDPS/status/1539256179234332673 (June 21, 2022) (reference materials for testimony before Texas Senate Special Committee to Protect All Texans).

[140] *See also* Committee interview of DPS Director Col. Steven C. McCraw (June 9, 2022) (incident timeline). The analysis provided to the Committee strongly suggests that of approximately 142 total rounds fired by the attacker in the building, approximately 21 of those rounds can be identified as being fired after officers entered the building. The first 11 officers to enter the building did so over the course of approximately 6 seconds. It thus appears to be virtually certain that over 100 rounds were fired before the arrival of the first responders.

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has advised the Committee there is no indication that the Hellfire device was used by the attacker. It is also possible that it was used.[141]

Terrified teachers and students throughout the west building heard this extended burst of gunfire, as did law enforcement officers who were arriving on the campus and closing in on the west building.[142] Responders heard the tail end of this gunfire as they entered the building through the south and west doors.[143] During those two and a half minutes of gunfire, it is likely that one of the bullets passed through the walls and struck Ms. Avila, the teacher in Room 109.[144]

Also during this time, at approximately 11:36 a.m., Uvalde Police Department dispatch received a call reporting a woman "shot in the head on Diaz Street."[145]

First Law Enforcement Approaches & Enters

After the attacker already had fired over 100 shots in Robb Elementary's west building, two separate groups of officers converged on the building at the same time from different directions. From the time of their initial entry and over the course of the next five minutes, the attacker fired approximately 16 additional rounds.

On the south side of the building, Chief Arredondo and Officer Adrian Gonzalez of the Uvalde CISD Police and Uvalde Police Officer Page and Sgt. Coronado approached. Officers Page and Gonzalez were the first to enter,[146] followed by Chief Arredondo, then by Sgt.

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[141] U.S. Dep't of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Report of Investigation #13 (June 2, 2022).

[142] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police (June 20, 2022).

[143] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Lt. Javier Martinez, Uvalde Police (June 29, 2022); *see also* Robb Elementary surveillance video.

[144] *See* Committee testimony of Elsa Avila, Robb Elementary teacher (June 30, 2022).

[145] Uvalde County Sheriff Ruben Nolasco testified to the Committee that while he was on his way to respond to the report of shots fired in the vicinity of Robb Elementary, he learned about the shooting of a woman on Diaz Street (who turned out to be the attacker's grandmother) from a man in a vehicle who flagged him down in the street. *See* Uvalde Police Department Call Sheet Report (May 24, 2022); Committee testimony of Uvalde County Sheriff Ruben Nolasco (July 11, 2022). Other information provided to the Committee has suggested that Sheriff Nolasco learned about the shooting on Diaz Street by other means, and perhaps earlier than he has acknowledged. In a desire to put this issue to rest, and to foreclose the suggestion that earlier reporting of the attacker's assault on his grandmother could have led to an earlier law enforcement intervention, the Committee has requested records from Sheriff Nolasco's mobile phones to confirm that he was not contacted directly for assistance on Diaz Street. The Committee has not yet received these records. The issue is important if a more timely report of the Diaz Street shooting could have prompted an earlier call from dispatch for law enforcement response to the area or an earlier Raptor alert at the school.

[146] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Officer Adrian Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD Police (June 20, 2022); DPS interview of Officer Donald Page, Uvalde Police (May 25, 2022).

Coronado. Officers Page and Gonzales both heard rounds as they were approaching.[147] So did Sgt. Coronado, who yelled "shots fired."[148]

Meanwhile, on the north side of the building, Lt. Martinez and Ssgt. Canales of the Uvalde Police entered the building first, followed by Uvalde Police Officer Louis Landry.[149] Lt. Martinez told a DPS investigator that he heard gunfire from inside the building, then he entered.[150] He testified to the Committee that he suspected the attacker was inside shooting,

West Building, Robb Elementary.

[147] *E.g.,* Committee testimony of Officer Adrian Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD Police (June 20, 2022); DPS interview of Officer Donald Page, Uvalde Police (May 25, 2022).

[148] *E.g.,* Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police (June 20, 2022); *see also* Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (11:36).

[149] DPS interview of Officer Louis Landry, Uvalde Police (May 26, 2022); *see also* Robb Elementary surveillance video.

[150] DPS interview of Lt. Javier Martinez, Uvalde Police(May 25, 2022); *see also* Robb Elementary surveillance video.

but that as he entered the building it was definitely quiet, with no screaming or crying. He said that on arrival inside the building, he heard "a few muffled shots."[151]

The evidence establishes that as they arrived at the west building, the initial responders knew there had been gunfire inside the building. They heard it as they were approaching. When they entered, they could see a cloud of debris in the hallway from drywall, as well as bullet holes in the walls and spent rifle casings on the floor. Yet the testimony received by the Committee also indicated that none of these initial responders recalled hearing screams or having any contemporaneous understanding, as they arrived in the building, that teachers and students just then had been shot inside the classrooms.

Uvalde Police officers enter from north end of hallway.

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[151] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Lt. Javier Martinez, Uvalde Police (June 29, 2022); *see also* Robb Elementary surveillance video.

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After entering the west building, the two separate groups of officers converged on Rooms 111 and 112. Coming from the south, Officer Page saw smoke and fog and observed that both classrooms were dark. Officer Gonzales remembers smelling gunpowder, saying that it looked smoky or cloudy, like someone set off a fire extinguisher.[152] Chief Arredondo made similar observations of smoke, and he also saw spent casings on the ground.[153] As Sgt. Coronado followed this group and Chief Arredondo from the south, he heard no more active gunfire as recorded on his body camera. It was quiet, and he could see bullet holes through the sheetrock.[154] On Sgt. Coronado's body camera footage, another officer can be heard saying, "it's an AR."[155] Upon entering the building, the officers tried but were unable to communicate on their radios. Officer Page stopped near Rooms 111 and 112,[156] and the school surveillance video suggests that the officers coming north from the south door were the first to reach the near vicinity of Rooms 111 and 112.

Simultaneously, Lt. Martinez followed by SSgt. Canales entered the hallway and approached Rooms 111 and 112, with Lt. Martinez approaching along the east wall and SSgt. Canales following along the west wall, as recorded on SSgt. Canales's body camera and the school surveillance video. Immediately behind them, four additional officers entered the building and remained in the north hallway.

At approximately 11:37 a.m., the officers converged from both sides of the hallway on Rooms 111 and 112. Coming from the north, Lt. Martinez peered into the vestibule for Rooms 111 and 112, and he faced gunfire, getting grazed by fragments of building material on the top of his head.[157] He immediately retreated to the north end of the hallway.[158] On the opposite side

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[152] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Officer Adrian Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD Police (June 20, 2022).

[153] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police, at 87 (June 21, 2022). Chief Arredondo testified that he recalled seeing "the locking mechanism" for the door to Room 111, or what he calls "a thumb, the locking mechanism that goes in the throw." He explained, "there's a small gap in between the door and the frame, and you could see, you know, a fraction of an inch. I have an image in my head of seeing that—that throw." *Id.* at 97. For the reasons explained above, the Committee finds it is most likely that the door to Room 111 was not properly or effectively locked.

[154] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police (June 20, 2022).

[155] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (11:36).

[156] DPS interview of Uvalde Police Department Officer Donald Page (May 25, 2022).

[157] ALERRT, *Robb Elementary School Attack Response Assessment and Recommendations* (July 6, 2022) (stating that Lt. Martinez and Ssgt. Canales were hit by "building material fragments caused by the suspect's rounds passing through the walls," citing "Investigating Officer Interview" and "Internal School Surveillance").

[158] *See* Robb Elementary surveillance video (11:36). The recent ALERRT report states that "[o]nce the officers retreated, they should have quickly made a plan to stop the attacker and gain access to the wounded," noting "[t]here were several possible plans that could have been implemented." "Perhaps the simplest plan," according to ALERRT, "would have been to push the team back down the hallway and attempt to control the classrooms

of the hall, fragments also hit SSgt. Canales on his ear. He likewise retreated and exited the building on the west side. No shots were fired at that time toward the attacker by the law enforcement responders.

What Happened for the Next 73 Minutes?

Like the initial approach into the west building, the remainder of law enforcement actions at Robb Elementary School until the ultimate breach of the classroom and neutralization of the attacker was a tale of two separate responses on the north and south sides of the hallway.

On the South …

After the attacker fired on the responders, Chief Arredondo noticed the light on in Room 110—the room immediately south of Room 111 which was used by Ms. Martinez, who had taken her class out of the building early for recess. Chief Arredondo wondered if there could be a threat in Room 110. The door was either open or unlocked. He entered to clear the room, and he saw holes in the wall. The room was vacant. He told the Committee he thought, "There's no babies in here. It's awards day."[159] He testified that he prayed that if Room 110 was empty, the children might be gone from the rooms occupied by the attacker as well.

Although the encounter had begun as an "active shooter" scenario, Chief Arredondo testified that he immediately began to think of the attacker as being "cornered" and the situation as being one of a "barricaded subject" where his priority was to protect people in the other classrooms from being victimized by the attacker.[160]

With the benefit of hindsight, we now know this was a terrible, tragic mistake.

Testifying before the Committee, Chief Arredondo explained his thinking on this subject at the time as follows:

> We have this guy cornered. We have a group of officers on … the north side, a group of officers on the south side, and we have children now that we know in these other rooms. My thought was: We're a barrier; get these kids out -- not the hallway, because the bullets

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from the windows in the doors." The report explains the purported simplicity of the plan by noting: "Any officer wearing rifle-rated body armor (e.g., plates) would have assumed the lead as they had an additional level of protection." ALERRT, *Robb Elementary School Attack Response Assessment and Recommendations* (July 6, 2022). A problem with ALERRT's depiction of its "simplest plan" is that no officer present was wearing "rifle-rated body armor (e.g., plates)." The Committee agrees the officers should have attempted to breach the classrooms even without armor, but it is inflammatory and misleading to release to the public a report describing "plans that could have been implemented" that assume the presence of protective equipment that the officers did not have.

[159] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[160] *Id.*

are flying through the walls, but get them out the wall – out the windows, because I know, on the outside, it's brick.

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[T]o me … once he's … in a room, you know, to me, he's barricaded in a room. Our thought was: "If he comes out, you know, you eliminate the threat," correct? And just the thought of other children being in other classrooms, my thought was: "We can't let him come back out. If he comes back out, we take him out, or we eliminate the threat. Let's get these children out."

It goes back to the categorizing. … I couldn't tell you when -- if there was any different kind of categorizing. I just knew that he was cornered. And my thought was: " … We're a wall for these kids." That's the way I looked at it. "We're a wall for these kids. We're not going to let him get to these kids in these classrooms" where … we saw the children.[161]

Chief Arredondo's testimony about his immediate perception of the circumstances is consistent with that of the other responders to the extent they uniformly testified that they were unaware of what was taking place behind the doors of Rooms 111 and 112. They obviously were in a school building, during school hours, and the attacker had fired a large number of rounds from inside those rooms. But the responders testified that they heard no screams or cries from within the rooms, and they did not know whether anyone was trapped inside needing rescue or medical attention. Not seeing any injured students during their initial foray into the hallway, Sgt. Coronado testified that he thought that it was probably a "bailout" situation.[162]

Chief Arredondo and other officers contended they were justified in treating the attacker as a "barricaded subject" rather than an "active shooter" because of lack of visual confirmation of injuries or other information. Chief Arredondo explained his reasoning for not continuing an active shooter-style response, telling the Committee:

[W]hen there's a threat … you have to visibly be able to see the threat. You have to have a target before you engage your firearm. That was just something that's gone through my head a million times … .[G]etting fired at through the wall … coming from a blind wall, I had no idea what was on the other side of that wall. But … you eliminate the threat when you could see it. … I never saw a threat. I never got to … physically see the threat or the shooter.[163]

This "barricaded subject" approach never changed over the course of the incident despite evidence that Chief Arredondo's perspective evolved to a later understanding that fatalities

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[161] *Id.* at 122, 125-25.

[162] *E.g.*, Committee testimony of Sgt. Daniel Coronado, Uvalde Police (June 20, 2022). Chief Arredondo also testified that the possibility of a bailout "came over my mind at some point … because they happen so often, and there's been a few that were armed." Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police, at 49 (June 21, 2022).

[163] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

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and injuries within the classrooms were a very strong probability.[164] He effectively conceded his error when asked what he would have done differently had he known injured victims were in the classroom. Chief Arredondo responded to the Committee: "I guess, if I knew there was somebody in there, I would have—we probably would have rallied a little more, to say, 'Okay, someone is in there.'"[165]

Chief Arredondo went to Room 109, found it locked and dark, saw a child's head, and realized there were students in that room.[166] Officer Gonzales asked Chief Arredondo if he wanted to activate the SWAT team, which he confirmed, so Gonzales then stepped out and made the call.[167] As mentioned earlier, however, the head of the Uvalde Police SWAT team already was in the building.

Chief Arredondo then used his mobile phone to call the Uvalde Police. The Department of Public Safety supplied the following transcription of that call:

> Hey..hey it's Arredondo..it's Arredondo can you hear me? No I have to tell you where we're at..it's an emergency right now. I'm inside the building, I'm
>
> *dispatcher can be heard talking in the background asking what room number*
>
> Is the teacher with him? Is the teacher with him? Is the teacher with him? Is she in the same room as him? Can you hear me? Ma'am?
>
> *dispatcher: I'm right here*
>
> Ma'am, is the teacher with him? In his classroom?
>
> *dispatcher: She's in another classroom she's in room 102. Another person possible shot across from her.*
>
> Okay, we have him in the room. he's got an AR15, he's shot a lot. He's in the room, he hasn't come out yet. We're surrounded, but I don't have a radio
>
> *dispatcher confirms SWAT location*
>
> Yes and they need to be outside of this building prepared. Because we don't have enough fire power right now it's all pistol and he has an AR15. If you
>
> *dispatcher asked if you can stay on the phone with me as long as you can*
>
> I am but I'm gonna drop it when he comes out of that door. Alright.
>
> *dispatcher advises over the radio that 401 has the shooter in 111 or 112. He's going to be armed with a rifle. He's requesting SWAT by the funeral home.*

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[164] For example, later in the incident, Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage recorded that somebody asked, at 12:34 p.m., "we don't know if he has anyone in the room with him, do we?" Chief Arredondo responded, "I think he does. There's probably some casualties." Sgt. Coronado agreed, saying "yeah, he does … casualties." Then at 12:41 p.m.: "Just so you understand, we think there are some injuries in there."

[165] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[166] *Id.*

[167] Committee testimony of Officer Adrian Gonzalez, Uvalde CISD Police (June 20, 2022); *see also* Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

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So. So I need you to bring a radio for me, and give me my radio for me. I need to get one
rifle. Hold on. I'm trying to set him, I'm trying to set him up.

By 11:42 a.m., Constable Johnny Field had arrived on the north end of the hallway.[168]
Constable Field saw Chief Arredondo on the other end and held up his phone. Chief
Arredondo called and began communicating with him by phone as his primary contact on the
north end.[169] They discussed the need to evacuate children from the building,[170] and Chief
Arredondo decided to accomplish that by breaking windows.[171] Officers Gonzales and Page
proceeded to start breaking classroom windows and helping to evacuate students from
classrooms.[172] Chief Arredondo found another unlocked classroom on the east side of the
hallway with a teacher and students locked down inside, and he told them to stay down.[173]

Meanwhile, Sgt. Coronado had exited the building through the south door and made his own
report by radio.[174] He requested shields and flashbangs from the police department, and he
asked for helicopter support and ballistic shields from the Department of Public Safety.
Agreeing with Chief Arredondo's assessment, he reported the shooter was "contained" inside
the building and "barricaded in one of the offices." Dispatch asked Sgt. Coronado if the
classroom door was locked. He responded he was not sure, but that they had a Halligan tool
to break it. Radio traffic indicated the attacker was in Ms. Mireles's classroom (Room 112) and
asked whether her students were inside. In response, Sgt. Coronado requested a mirror to look
around corners. A voice on the radio stated that "the class should be in session."[175]

After the initial responders took fire from the attacker, Sgt. Coronado remained outside the
building on the south and west sides for a total of approximately 30 minutes,[176] regularly

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[168] *See* Robb Elementary surveillance video.

[169] Testimony of Constable Johnny Field, Uvalde County Pct. 1 (June 30, 2022); Testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[170] Testimony of Constable Johnny Field, Uvalde County Pct. 1 (June 30, 2022).

[171] Testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[172] Testimony of Officer Adrian Gonzalez, UCISD Police (June 20, 2022) (stating that after calling for SWAT, he began to help evacuating children on his own initiative and received no further orders from Chief Arredondo).

[173] Testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[174] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (11:38).

[175] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (11:43).

[176] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera documented his activity. At 11:44 a.m., a responder asked by radio where he was needed, and received direction to head to the south side of the school. The responder then stated that a lot of people were pulling up by the funeral home. Sgt. Coronado responded to have some officers available to keep everybody back. At 11:48 am he suggested locking down the high school and all the other schools. At 11:49 a.m., a little more than 10 minutes after their initial encounter with the attacker, Sgt. Coronado warned arriving officers about a doorway and a "fatal funnel." He asked them to prop open the south door.

advising other officers to be careful about potential crossfire or a "fatal funnel" in the hallway and assisting the evacuation of students and teachers through windows on the west side of the building. When some newly arrived responders appeared to suggest that the officers should clear out of the south side of the hallway because United States Border Patrol Tactical Unit (BORTAC) responders were operating on the opposite end, Sgt. Coronado responded, "Chief is in there, Chief is in charge right now,"[177] suggesting both that Chief Arredondo was in control and in communication with the other side of the building.

While Sgt. Coronado was outside, his body camera recorded several people commenting on the need to find a master key to the classrooms. Once Sgt. Coronado returned inside the south side of the hallway, he found Chief Arredondo on his phone also asking for a key, which was a primary focus of his attention for the next 40 minutes. Chief Arredondo personally tried all of one large set of keys brought to him,[178] and when Sgt. Coronado cautioned him to stay clear of the hallway and the "fatal funnel," Chief Arredondo responded, "just tell them to f***ing wait."[179]

Much of this time was spent by Chief Arredondo on the phone with Constable Field. He issued a series of additional requests for equipment and support, including snipers,[180] a master key,[181] and breaching tools,[182] repeatedly referencing the need for a key and breaching tools before they could attempt to enter the classrooms with the attacker. While waiting, he also periodically attempted to communicate with the attacker in English and Spanish, including immediately after four shots were fired inside the classroom at 12:21 p.m.

Despite all of the discussion of breaching tools, Chief Arredondo testified no one made him aware when one arrived at the building.[183]

Chief Arredondo prioritized making certain all other classrooms in the building were cleared of teachers and students, including the evacuation of Room 109, where the attacker had shot Ms. Avila through the walls.[184] In the context of this evacuation, Chief Arredondo commented

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[177] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage.

[178] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (12:17 p.m.).

[179] *Id.* (12:17 p.m.).

[180] *Id.* (12:14 p.m.).

[181] *Id.* (12:16 p.m.).

[182] *Id.* (12:21 p.m.); *see also* Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[183] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[184] *See* Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (12:26 p.m.).

that "people are going to ask why we're taking so long," and, in an apparent reference to the ongoing evacuations, that they were trying to care of "the rest of the lives first."[185]

In addition to seeking keys and a breaching tool, the other predominant theme on the south side of the building was waiting for BORTAC to breach the classrooms. Chief Arredondo discussed with Constable Field various means of assisting the breach, such as by using a sniper or flashbangs to kill or distract the attacker.[186]

Beginning around 12:30 p.m., various officers entered through the south door and walked by Chief Arredondo and Sgt. Coronado, stacking up south of Rooms 111 and 112 and on the west side of the hallway, anticipating a move to breach the classrooms.[187]

Responders stack in hallway south of Rooms 111 & 112.

At 12:45 p.m., somebody commented that a Ranger had a set of keys that was being tested. And finally, at 12:50 p.m., a team of officers made entry into the classrooms and killed the attacker, with officers stationed in the south part of the hallway quickly falling in behind them and entering Rooms 111 and 112.

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[185] Other public reports about this particular quote appear to be inaccurate.

[186] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (12:17 p.m.).

[187] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage; *see also* Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022); Committee testimony of Trooper Joshua Bordovsky, Tex. Dep't of Public Safety (June 20, 2022).

Chief Arredondo testified that the only direction he gave to the north side of the building, through Constable Field, was for them to evacuate the kids and to test the keys before trying to go into the room with the attacker. He said he did not make any decision for BORTAC to breach the classrooms.[188]

Rewinding the clock to the point at which the attacker shot at the initial responders in the building, there were three Uvalde Police officers who led the way down the hallway from the north side of the building: Lt. Martinez, followed by SSgt. Canales, followed by Officer Landry. Building fragments hit Lt. Martinez and SSgt. Canales as the attacker shot into the hallway, and all three officers retreated to the north end.

As Ssgt. Canales ran out, his body camera documented the presence of multiple officers in the north hallway and a Department of Public Safety trooper stationed at the door as he exited to the west. Ssgt. Canales stated "we got to get in there," and he made a phone call requesting more help.[189] Uvalde Police Officer Landry, who had been third in line on the north side behind Lt. Martinez and Ssgt. Canales, also exited the building on the west side, then moved to the south side of the building where he began helping to clear classrooms and waiting for specialized teams to arrive.[190] After the initial shock of taking gunfire, Lt. Martinez returned south back down the hallway. Following active shooter training, he began to advance again toward Rooms 111 and 112 in an evident desire to maintain momentum and to "stop the killing," but this time no other officers followed him. Several law enforcement officers suggested to the Committee that if others had followed him as backup, Lt. Martinez might have made it back to the classroom doors and engaged. Later, he helped to evacuate children from classrooms and moved to the south side of the building, and ultimately he was part of the stack of officers on that side of the hallway when BORTAC finally breached the classrooms.

The school surveillance camera installed where the north-south hallway intersects the east-west hallway at the north end of the building captured the movement and activity of law enforcement officers on the north side of the building. From that perspective, the period from 11:37 a.m., when Lt. Martinez, Ssgt. Canales, and Officer Landry made their retreat from the attacker's gunfire, to 12:50 p.m., when a BORTAC-led stack finally made entry into the

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[188] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[189] *See* Ssgt. Canales's body-worn camera footage.

[190] DPS interview of Uvalde Police Department Officer Louis Landry (May 26, 2022).

classrooms, saw the movement of dozens of officers from a variety of law enforcement agencies in and out of the north hallway, positioning and preparing themselves for the eventual breaching effort.

At first, responders from the Uvalde Police Department, including the acting chief of police on that day, Lt. Mariano Pargas, dominated the north end of the building. Lt. Pargas, who was one of the earliest responders, testified that he was never in communication with Chief Arredondo, and that he was unaware of any communication with law enforcement officers on the south side of the building. He told the Committee he figured that Chief Arredondo had jurisdiction over the incident and that he must have been coordinating the law enforcement response—and that the Uvalde Police were there to assist. He did not coordinate with any of the other agencies that responded, such as the Uvalde Sheriff's Office and the Department of Public Safety. Lt. Pargas did receive a phone call from the chief of the Uvalde Police, who was out of town on vacation, who called to tell him to set up a command post right away. Lt. Pargas testified that he went to the back of the funeral home to start a command post, that the funeral home provided an office, and that then he went back outside to try to keep up with what was going on.[191] This did not result in the establishment of an effective command post.

Lt. Pargas was present when a Uvalde CISD officer, Ruben Ruiz, entered through the west door and stated, "she says she is shot." Officer Ruiz was referring to his wife, Ms. Mireles, who was one of the teachers in Room 112. Officer Ruiz was escorted away from the building. Lt. Pargas also testified he heard on the radio about 911 calls that had come from inside the classrooms, and he told the Committee that it was his understanding that officers on the north side of the building understood there were victims trapped inside the classroom with the attacker. According to Lt. Pargas, while nobody said it, the officers on the north side of the building were waiting for other personnel to arrive from Department of Public Safety or BORTAC, with better equipment like rifle-rated shields.[192]

As responders continued to arrive on the scene, officers stationed outside the building directed them to assist on the perimeter. Special Agent Luke Williams of the Department of Public Safety testified that upon his arrival he disregarded a request that he assist at the perimeter, and instead he proceeded into the east door on the north side of the building. He began to clear rooms along the north hallway, and he found a student hiding in the boys' restroom. The student had his legs up so as not to be seen, and as he had been trained to do, he demanded

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[191] Committee testimony of Lt. Mariano Pargas, Jr., Uvalde Police (June 29, 2022).

[192] *Id.*

that Special Agent Williams confirm he was with law enforcement, which he did by showing his badge under the stall.

As Special Agent Williams then approached the intersection of the hallways from the east where a group of officers was positioned at the west side of the intersection with weapons pointed south, he heard somebody ask, "y'all don't know if there's kids in there?" Special Agent Williams interjected, "if there's kids in there we need to go in there."

Responders positioned in north end of hallway (Special Agent Williams's body camera).

An officer who had been positioned in the hallway responded to Special Agent Williams that whoever was in charge would figure that out. Another officer pointed out to him that his position on the east side of the intersection was creating a crossfire situation relative to the group of officers pointing their weapons toward Rooms 111 and 112 from the south. Special Agent Williams departed to continue clearing other classrooms.[193]

Between 11:52 a.m. and 12:21 p.m., the surveillance video shows four different ballistic shields arriving in the building. Importantly, however, only the last shield, furnished by the U.S. Marshals, was rifle-rated. The Committee heard evidence that the rifle-rated shield was the only one that would have provided meaningful protection to officers against the attacker's AR-15 rifle. The Committee received no evidence that anyone told Chief Arredondo or anyone else on the south side of the building about the arrival of the rifle-rated shield.

Just before 12:30 p.m., there was a burst of activity on the north side. A group of officers moved past the position previously established at the north hallway intersection, and they began to establish a stack close to the north side of Rooms 111 and 112. Viewed from the south, Sgt. Coronado announced the arrival of BORTAC.[194] Another group of officers began to stage medical triage equipment in the east side of the north hallway. This indicates that BORTAC likely assumed tactical command of the incident at this time.

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[193] *See* Special Agent Williams's body-worn camera footage.

[194] Sgt. Coronado's body-worn camera footage (12:29 p.m.).

BORTAC Acting Commander Paul Guerrero came to the north side of the building upon his arrival at Robb Elementary. In a post-incident statement, he said he was advised "that the subject had possibly shot multiple children and was still in the classroom." He requested surveillance through the back windows of Rooms 111 and 112 to possibly deploy gas as they made entry. He then went to retrieve a Halligan tool from his car.[195] The school's surveillance camera shows the arrival of a Halligan breaching tool at 12:35 p.m..[196] The Committee received no evidence that the arrival of the breaching tool ever was communicated to Chief Arredondo or anyone else on the south side of the building.

According to his statement, Cdr. Guerrero attempted to pry open a door in the hallway to see if the Halligan tool would work. He determined it would take too long and dangerously expose an officer to gunfire coming from inside the classroom. He observed that the classroom doorway had multiple holes consistent with bullet holes, and he did not want to expose or jeopardize the safety and lives of any officers by trying to pry the door open.[197]

Cdr. Guerrero then obtained a master key from an officer at the scene. As he made his way to the classroom door, an officer advised him to try it on another door first. He attempted to open another door along the hallway, and it did not work. He saw a few Border Patrol agents and advised them to start setting up for a triage situation of mass casualties. He then received a second master key, which he successfully used to open another door.[198]

Working with the BORTAC team, Cdr. Guerrero had another agent use the rifle-rated ballistic shield to give him cover as he opened the classroom door. Cdr. Guerrero placed the key in the door to Room 111 and opened the door. (Cdr. Guerrero's contemporaneous report stated that he unlocked the door,[199] but as explained above, there is reason to question whether the door was actually locked.)

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[195] Statement of Agent Paul Guerrero (undated, taken by Ranger Ricardo Guajardo).

[196] *See* Special Agent Williams's body-worn camera footage.

[197] *Id.*

[198] *Id.*

[199] In his statement, Commander Guerrero said "I placed the key into the keyhole. The key worked and I was able to unlock and open the door." *Id.*; *see also* Statement of Agent Warren John Becker (undated, taken by Ranger Tyler Williamson) ("The door was locked, and I utilized the shield to provide cover for Acting BORTAC Commander Guerrero as he opened the door with the master key.").

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The attacker was standing in front of a closet in the corner of Room 111, and he fired his rifle at the stack of officers coming through the classroom door. The officers fired on the attacker, killing him.[200]

The Committee has been advised that none of the Border Patrol agents involved in opening the door were wearing activated body cameras.

On the Outside …

As mentioned in the narratives above, there were important events happening outside the north and south ends of the west building. In part due to the difficulty of maintaining radio communications within the building, not everybody inside the building received all of this information.

A police radio communication of unknown origin stated at 11:56 a.m.: "[I]t is critical for everybody to let PD take point on this."[201] None of the witnesses interviewed by the Committee indicated any knowledge of this communication or what it meant by "PD" taking "point on this." The general consensus of witnesses interviewed by the Committee was that officers on the scene either assumed that Chief Arredondo was in charge, or that they could not tell that anybody was in charge of a scene described by several witnesses as "chaos" or a "cluster."

There was a series of phone calls with a student inside Room 112, initiated by the student calling 911 at 12:03 p.m.. Radio traffic communicated to those officers who could hear it the fact that a student had called from within the classroom. Several witnesses indicated that they were aware of this, but not Chief Arredondo. The Committee has received no evidence that any officer who did learn about phone calls coming from inside Rooms 111 and 112 acted on it to advocate shifting to an active shooter-style response or otherwise acting more urgently to breach the classrooms.

What Didn't Happen in Those 73 Minutes?

A major error in the law enforcement response at Robb Elementary School was the failure of any officers to assume and exercise effective incident command. Uvalde Police officers responding to a vehicle wreck and shots fired appear to have arrived first on the scene, which would make one of them the initial incident commander. Uvalde CISD Police Chief Arredondo quickly arrived as the incident moved to school property and the law enforcement

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[200] Statement of Agent Paul Guerrero (undated, taken by Ranger Ricardo Guajardo).

[201] Source: DPS timeline.

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response evolved. This made him a natural person to assume command over an incident as it developed. But Chief Arredondo does not consider himself to have assumed incident command. He explained to the Committee:

> [W]hile you're in there, you don't title yourself … .I know our policy states you're the incident commander. My approach and thought was responding as a police officer. And so I didn't title myself. But once I got in there and we took that fire, back then, I realized, we need some things. We've got to get in that door. We need an extraction tool. We need those keys. As far as … I'm talking about the command part … the people that went in, there was a big group of them outside that door. I have no idea who they were and how they walked in or anything. I kind of – I wasn't given that direction.
>
> ***
>
> you can always hope and pray that there's an incident command post outside. I just didn't have access to that. I didn't know anything about that.[202]

Other people could have assumed command, including the next people in Uvalde CISD's preassigned line of command for active shooter response or others on the scene with more experience or training. ALERRT training teaches that any law enforcement officer can assume command, that somebody must assume command, and that an incident commander can transfer responsibility as an incident develops. That did not happen at Robb Elementary, and the lack of effective incident command is a major factor that caused other vital measures to be left undone. Also, the misinformation reported to officers on the outside likely prevented some of them from taking a more assertive role. For example, many officers were told to stay out of the building because Chief Arredondo was inside a room with the attacker actively negotiating.

Responders did not remain focused on the task of "stopping the killing" as instructed by active shooter training.[203] They never attempted to breach the classroom before BORTAC accomplished entry. Chief Arredondo explained:

> I knew those doors … .Those doors opened outward. … They're thick, heavy doors with a metal frame. Most people are used -- as police officers, used to going to a residence and you kick in doors. That's just such a common thing in our business. You didn't have that option here. I knew a ramrod, which I call a buddy, which is … a heavy pipe with two handles, that wasn't going to work … and that's why I called for that extraction tool and keys.[204]

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[202] Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[203] *E.g.*, *id.*

[204] *Id.*

But nobody ever checked the doors of Rooms 111 or 112 to confirm they were actually locked or secured.[205] Room 111 probably was not. Chief Arredondo's search for a key consumed his attention and wasted precious time, delaying the breach of the classrooms.[206]

Nobody called Principal Gutierrez to ask about the location of a master key.[207] She had a key, and the head custodian had a key. Yet despite all the effort to find a key, nobody called her.

Although discussed on both the south and north sides of the building, nobody ever created a diversion on the east side of the building, where Rooms 111 and 112 had windows.[208]

And although it should not have proved necessary had responders remained focused on "stopping the killing" as soon as possible, as the incident dragged on, nobody tasked any law enforcement responder to establish reliable communications between the south and north sides of the building and with resources outside the building. Radio communication was ineffective, so something else was needed for decisionmakers to receive critical information, such as the fact that victims had called from inside the rooms with the attacker.[209] To the extent there was confusion among officers about whether the scenario was an "active shooter" or "barricaded subject," information that there were wounded victims in the rooms would have clarified the existence of an active shooter scenario.

Law Enforcement Responder Headcount

In total, 376 law enforcement officers responded to the tragedy at Robb Elementary School.

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[205] *E.g.*, Testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[206] ALERRT has noted the failure to check the lock in its criticisms. *See* ALERRT, *Robb Elementary School Attack Response Assessment and Recommendations* at 18-19 (July 6, 2022). A representative of ALERRT testified before the Committee that the "first rule of breaching" is to check the lock. *See* Testimony of John Curnutt, ALERRT (July 11, 2022). Unfortunately, ALERRT apparently has neglected to include that "first rule of breaching" in its active-shooter training materials, which includes modules entitled "Closed and Locked Interior Doors" and "Entering Locked Buildings Quickly, Discreetly, and Safely." *See* Federal Bureau of Investigation & ALERRT, *Active Shooter Response – Level 1*, at STU 3-8 – 3-10, 4-20 – 4-25.

[207] *E.g.*, Testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022) (no recollection of communicating with Principal Gutierrez).

[208] *E.g.*, Testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022).

[209] *See* Testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police (June 21, 2022) (did not recall tasking anyone, commented "it would be fantastic" to have the most up-to-date information and that his "priority was to get into that classroom," and "I didn't have communication with … what was going on outside. My big thing was getting through that door.").

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The breakdown of responders, by agency, is as follows:[210]

149	United States Border Patrol
91	Texas Department of Public Safety
25	Uvalde Police Department
16	San Antonio Police Department (SWAT)
16	Uvalde County Sheriff's Office
14	Department of Homeland Security – HIS
13	United States Marshals
8	Drug Enforcement Agency
7	Frio County Sheriff's Office
5	Kinney County Sheriff's Office
5	Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District
4	Dilley Police Department
4	Zavala County Sheriff's Office
3	Medina County Sheriff's Office
3	Sabinal Police Department
2	City of Uvalde Fire Marshals
2	Pearsall Police Department
2	Texas Parks and Wildlife
2	Uvalde County Constables
2	Val Verde County Sheriff's Office
1	Frio County Constables
1	Southwest Texas Junior College
1	Zavala County Constables

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[210] Source: Texas Department of Public Safety.

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6 | Information Flow

This Committee's chief goal from the very beginning has been to provide accurate information from dependable sources. The public's need for accurate information only has intensified as we have investigated the facts surrounding the tragedy. Problems with the flow of information have plagued government, media, and public discussion about what happened at Robb Elementary from the outset—damaging public trust, inflicting a very real toll on the people of Uvalde, and creating an imperative to provide a reliable set of facts.

The First Reports

Shortly after the shooting, authorities first reported to the public that the shooter killed fourteen students and one teacher, and the attacker was reported dead at that time.[211]

The next day, state leaders looked to law enforcement for more information in preparation for a broader press conference. The briefing was planned to be led by a Uvalde police lieutenant who had been at the scene, but that officer literally passed out while waiting in the hallway beforehand. In his place, the DPS Regional Director for South Texas, Victor Escalon, agreed to conduct the briefing.[212] Director Escalon, who is not based in Uvalde, had arrived on the scene shortly before the attacker was killed. He did not personally witness the bulk of the day's events, leaving him to depend on secondhand knowledge acquired from other law enforcement officers who had been part of the response.[213]

That briefing was the basis for the press conference the day after the shooting, in which Governor Abbott and other leaders relied on the information law enforcement gave them. After correcting the death toll to nineteen students and two teachers, they made statements based upon Director Escalon's briefing (which itself was based entirely on secondhand knowledge). These statements repeated a false narrative that the entire incident lasted as little as forty minutes thanks to officers who rapidly devised a plan, stacked up, and neutralized the attacker. The general sentiments shared that day were that law enforcement responders were courageous in keeping the attacker pinned down while children were evacuated.

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[211] All press conferences referenced in this report were recorded.

[212] Committee testimony of DPS Director Col. Steven C. McCraw (July 11, 2022).

[213] Uvalde CISD Police Chief Pete Arredondo said he approached Regional Director Escalon after the briefing because he was surprised and frustrated after hearing his comments that a school district officer had engaged the attacker. "Y'all haven't even gotten our statements yet," he told Escalon. "We were all the first ones there." Chief Arredondo testified: "he corrected that. But during the press conference, it still came out that way." Committee testimony of Chief Pete Arredondo, Uvalde CISD Police, at 180-81 (June 21, 2022).

Another press conference was held the next day outside of Robb Elementary School, and new details emerged. One was: "The back door was propped open. It wasn't supposed to be … a teacher … propped it open [and] that was an access point that the subject used." The idea that the door was propped open led to public outcry, and even a teacher who was not implicated was devastated as she wondered whether she had accidentally left a door open.[214] The truth—confirmed by video—is that while a teacher had propped open the west exterior door, she actually saw the attacker approaching and slammed that door shut as she called 911 for help. The door was closed; it simply was either already unlocked or the lock failed to engage, which she could not have known because the doors lock from the outside.[215] On May 31, it was confirmed that her account was correct.[216]

The media repeated the communication failures of relevant authorities, supplemented by leaks released uncritically. The Committee certainly does not question the role or value of reporting by the press, but it is unfortunate that caution and context have been so uncommon. Various people commenting publicly perpetually have taken information at face value, presenting it as definitive when provided as tentative, and they rarely have characterized it as one small part of a vastly larger body of evidence. (To their credit, some outlets did produce original investigative pieces questioning many of the inconsistencies documented earlier.)

The Committee recognizes the natural tension between providing the public with immediate information and the need for accuracy. A complete and thorough investigation can take months or even years to confirm every detail, especially when this many law enforcement officers are involved. However, one would expect law enforcement during a briefing would be very careful to state what facts are verifiable, and which ones are not.

While this is by no means an exhaustive list, the Committee draws attention to two instances to make its broader points.

ALERRT Report

The first instance is based upon the report, and subsequent media coverage, of the report released by the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) Center. The report was "based on an incident briefing held for select ALERRT staff . . . for approximately

[214] One teacher emotionally testified to the Committee that she had spent several distraught days thinking it was her fault the attacker had entered the building, and she had gone as far as apologizing to people.

[215] Like virtually all schools, Robb Elementary made use of "Columbine" doors that can only be locked from the outside; from the inside, exterior doors are opened with a push bar.

[216] Travis Considine, chief communications officer for DPS, confirmed this for the Associated Press as one of their reporters explored the story.

1 hour" along with some unspecified "additional information" staff later received from DPS.[217] ALERRT conducted no investigation of its own and spoke to no witnesses, relying instead on a snapshot of an evolving investigation. One of its conclusions was a bombshell: a "UPD officer was armed with a rifle and sighted in to shoot the attacker; however, he asked his supervisor for permission to shoot."[218] He failed to get a response, and the attacker quickly slipped into the school.

During testimony before the Committee, an ALERRT representative admitted he had learned that DPS had received an additional statement from the officer, stating he no longer believed he had seen the attacker when he sought permission to shoot. In fact, and as the Committee has concluded, that officer saw a coach ushering kids inside—something the Texas Rangers, under the purview of DPS, had discussed with the officer during a later interview. Uvalde Mayor McLaughlin issued a statement explaining as much, and ALERRT quickly caveated its findings, saying it did not know "the officer gave a third statement to investigators that was different from the first two statements."

Video Evidence

The Committee fought hard to make sure the public could see the hallway video (although, as previously stated, the Committee would not have shown the images of the attacker and would have let the families of the victims see it first). Our justification was that we could tell people all day long what we saw, but everyone needed to see it for themselves.

After the leak of part of a composite video prepared by the FBI, images began circulating condemning some shown on it. "Cellphone cop" was said to be standing around checking his phone, indifferent. What those sharing it did not know was that it was an image of Eva Mireles's husband. She had been in contact with him already, and when he moved off camera later, she told him she was dying. After receiving this call, he was naturally devastated and was not permitted to return by other law enforcement officers. While this report has cited numerous failures by law enforcement, the actions of this man were not among them.

The problem, of course, is the power, speed, and unaccountable nature of social media. While it allows the truth to spread, it has done far more to amplify incorrect or incomplete information. This is an example of how a picture without context can lead to an incomplete or false impression that is repeated even by respected news organizations. Mark Twain said it best: "A lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth puts on its shoes."

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[217] *See* ALERRT, *Robb Elementary School Attack Response Assessment and Recommendations* at 3 (July 6, 2022).

[218] *Id.* at 15.

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This report has addressed many of the discrepancies and loose threads related to the Robb Elementary shooting, and the Committee focused on research and documentation to support its findings, in part because we expected to be met with rightful skepticism after everything that has happened. The results of the information issues surrounding the shooting are wide ranging and will be felt for a long time to come.

An uncertain narrative also opens the door much wider for conspiracy theories, many of which have been harmful. The fear of a coverup is palpable here, and while most see it as simply part of an intragovernmental "blame game," others have made wild accusations that authorities are sweeping some major scandal under the rug.[219] Comments on social media have repeated and shared specific false allegations about the attacker's identity and associations. And predictably, some have promoted the disgusting Sandy Hook-style claim that Robb Elementary was home to a hoax or "false flag" operation.[220] While this and similar claims might seem obviously beneath our dignifying with a response, it does become harder to proclaim the truth when it is so opaque.

Most fundamentally, there has been a loss of trust in government. As peace officers' union CLEAT said in a recent release, the "great deal of false and misleading information" means that sources "Texans once saw as iron-clad and completely reliable have now been proven false."[221] The Committee certainly has felt the distrust and doubt about its work from those who have cynically but justifiably worried about the way we conducted our investigation.

We tried at every turn to elevate and respect the needs of Uvalde, because nowhere has unreliable information more impacted a community. We saw wounds continuously ripped open and agonizing disillusionment grow there among the people who most deserve swift, sure answers about the tragedy that shook their community. Uvalde itself has paid a terrible price as it has waited for the truth and waded through the shaky narrative given instead.

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[219] In fact, #uvaldecoverup is a popular hashtag for tweets related to the Robb Elementary School shooting, and those are the kinds of claims regularly associated with it.

[220] Some coverage can be found at the *Houston Chronicle* (https://www.houstonchronicle.com/politics/texas/politifact/article/fact-check-uvalde-false-flag-17214816.php), among other outlets.

[221] CLEAT's release is at https://www.cleat.org/cleat-response-to-uvalde-mass-shooting/.

7 | FACTUAL CONCLUSIONS

Based on the foregoing information developed through its investigation, the Committee has drawn the following preliminary conclusions:

1. **Uvalde CISD and Robb Elementary**

   a. *Communications and lockdown alerts*:

      i. Poor wi-fi connectivity in Robb Elementary likely delayed the lockdown alert through the Raptor application.

      ii. Once the alert was sent, not all teachers received it immediately for a variety of reasons including wi-fi coverage, whether the teacher used the Raptor phone application (as opposed to logging in through a web browser), and whether the teacher was carrying a phone at the time.

      iii. No one used the school intercom as another means to communicate the lockdown.

      iv. As a result, not all teachers received timely notice of the lockdown, including the teacher in Room 111.

   b. *Effect of bailouts*:

      i. The frequency of less-serious bailout-related alerts in Uvalde diluted the significance of alerts and dampened everyone's readiness to act on alerts.

      ii. In response to the May 24, 2022, lockdown alert at Robb Elementary, the initial reaction of many administrators, teachers, and law enforcement responders was that it likely was a less-dangerous bailout.

   c. *Doors and locks*:

      i. Robb Elementary had recurring problems with maintaining its doors and locks.

      ii. In particular, the locking mechanism to Room 111 was widely known to be faulty, yet it was not repaired.

         1. The Robb Elementary principal, her assistant responsible for entering maintenance work orders, the teacher in Room 111, other teachers in the fourth grade building, and even many fourth grade students widely knew of the problem with the lock to Room 111.

2. Nevertheless, no one placed a work order to repair the lock—not the principal, her secretary, the teacher to Room 111, or anyone else.

iii. Robb Elementary had a culture of noncompliance with safety policies requiring doors to be kept locked, which turned out to be fatal.

    1. Exterior doors.

        a. Teachers at Robb Elementary often used rocks to prop open exterior doors.

        b. The west door to the west building was supposed to be continuously locked. When the attacker approached on May 24, 2022, it was unlocked, and he was able to enter the building there.

        c. If the door had been locked as policy required, the attacker likely would have been slowed for some period of time as he either circumvented the lock or moved to another point of entry into the building.

    2. Interior classroom doors.

        a. Teachers at Robb Elementary commonly left interior doors unlocked for convenience, and they also used magnets and other methods to circumvent door locks.

        b. The doors to Rooms 111 and 112 were required to be locked at all times, and in a lockdown, the teachers were supposed to check that they were locked.

            i. A teacher in Room 112 was seen locking her classroom door after the lockdown alert.

            ii. The door to Room 111 probably was not locked. The teacher in Room 111 does not recall hearing the lockdown alert. The door required special effort to lock it, and the teacher has no memory of having done so. The attacker apparently did not have to take any actions to overcome a locked door before entering the classrooms.

        c. If the door to Room 111 had been locked, the attacker likely would have been slowed for some time as he either circumvented the lock or took some other alternative course of action.

2. **Information that was known or knowable about the attacker**

    a. *Home and family*:

        i. The attacker had an unstable home life with no father figure and a mother struggling with *a* substance abuse disorder.

        ii. The attacker's family moved often and lived in relative poverty.

        iii. The attacker developed sociopathic and violent tendencies, but he received no mental health assistance

        iv. Various members of the attacker's family were aware during the time leading up to the attacker's 18th birthday that he was estranged from his mother and that he had asked for help in buying guns through straw purchases that would have been illegal. Family members uniformly refused to buy guns for him.

        v. During the week between his 18th birthday and the events of May 24, 2022, the attacker expressed suicidal ideation to a cousin, who talked to him and did not believe he was an imminent suicide risk.

        vi. During the week between his 18th birthday and the events of May 24, 2022, the attacker's grandparents and other family members became aware that the attacker had bought guns. The grandparents demanded that the guns be removed from their home.

    b. *School*:

        i. The attacker struggled academically throughout his time in school.

        ii. The school made no meaningful intervention with the attacker before he was involuntarily withdrawn for poor academic performance and excessive absences.

        iii. The attacker had few disciplinary issues at school, but he was suspended once for a fight.

        iv. Due to his excessive absences, there apparently was no information actually known to the school district that should have identified this attacker as a threat to any school campus.

    c. *Law enforcement*: There apparently was no information actually known to local Uvalde law enforcement that should have identified this attacker as a threat to any school campus before May 24, 2022.

    d. *Friends and acquaintances*: Some of attacker's social media contacts received messages from the attacker related to guns, suggesting that he was going to do

something they would hear about in the news, and even referring to attacking a school.

e. *Social media*:

    i. Reports suggest that some social-media users may have reported the attacker's threatening behavior to the relevant social media platforms. The social media platforms appear to have not done anything in response to restrict the attacker's social media access or report his behavior to law enforcement authorities.

    ii. The services used by Uvalde CISD to monitor social media for threats did not provide any alert of threatening behavior by the attacker.

f. *Firearms and ammunition sellers*: There was no legal impediment to the attacker buying two AR-15-style rifles, 60 magazines, and over 2,000 rounds of ammunition when he turned 18. The ATF was not required to notify the local sheriff of the multiple purchases.

3. **Law enforcement response on May 24, 2022**

a. There was no law enforcement officer on the Robb Elementary campus when the attacker came over the fence and toward the school.

b. Citizens at the scene quickly alerted local law enforcement about a vehicle accident, a man with a gun, and shots fired near the Robb Elementary campus.

c. As initially reported by Uvalde Police dispatch and as understood by most initial responders, the incident began off-campus and as one that would have been in the jurisdiction of the Uvalde Police Department. Uvalde Police officers were among the first, if not the first, law enforcement responders on the scene as a man firing a gun moved toward Robb Elementary School.

d. As the situation developed and responders received more information, it became apparent that the threat moved on to the school campus and within the jurisdiction of the Uvalde CISD Police Department.

e. Multiple law enforcement officers arrived at Robb Elementary within a few minutes of the attacker coming over the fence.

f. A Uvalde Police Department officer saw a person dressed in black and thought it might have been the attacker. From a distance of over 100 yards, that officer requested permission to shoot. Subsequent analysis suggests that the person in black was a school coach, and the officer did not have an opportunity to stop the attacker by shooting him before he entered the west building.

g. Robb Elementary School Coach Yvette Silva acted heroically and almost certainly saved lives by alerting the school to the attacker's advance. Most fourth grade classes successfully locked down as a result of her quick response.

h. After entering through the unlocked west door, the attacker had about three minutes in the west building before first responders arrived at the building, including approximately two and a half minutes during which the attacker is estimated to have fired over 100 rounds.

i. The initial responders to the west building heard gunfire and encountered a hallway with a fog of drywall debris, bullet holes, and empty rifle casings. They converged on Rooms 111 and 112, which they identified as the location of the attacker. They acted appropriately by attempting to breach the classrooms and stop the attacker. The attacker immediately repelled them with a burst of rifle fire from inside the classrooms.

j. The responders immediately began to assess options to breach the classroom, but they lost critical momentum by treating the scenario as a "barricaded subject" instead of with the greater urgency attached to an "active shooter" scenario.

k. It actually was an "active shooter" scenario because the attacker was preventing critically injured victims from getting medical attention.

   i. An active shooter scenario differs from a barricaded-subject scenario in that law enforcement officers responding to an active shooter are trained to prioritize the safety of innocent victims over the safety of law enforcement responders.

   ii. At first, the first responders did not have "reliable evidence" about whether there were injured victims inside Rooms 111 and 112, although circumstantial evidence strongly suggested that possibility, including the fact that the attacker had fired many rounds inside classrooms at a time when students were in attendance.

   iii. The ALERRT training "reliable evidence" standard does not align with the "reasonable officer" standard applied by ALERRT in its preliminary and partial report.

l. Uvalde CISD's active shooter policy called for Uvalde CISD Police Chief Arredondo to be the incident commander in any active shooter response.

   i. Chief Arredondo was one of the first responders to arrive at the west building.

   ii. In the initial response to the incident, Chief Arredondo was actively engaged in the effort to "stop the killing" up to the point when the attacker was located in Rooms 111 and 112, and the attacker fired on responding officers.

   iii. By this time, there were dozens of officers on the scene, but Chief Arredondo did not assume his preassigned responsibility of incident command, which would have entailed informing other officers that he

was in command and also leaving the building to exercise command, beginning with establishing an incident command post.

    iv. Instead, he remained in the hallway where he lacked reliable communication with other elements of law enforcement, and he was unable to effectively implement staging or command and control of the situation.

m. Over the course of the next hour, hundreds of law enforcement officers arrived at the scene.

    i. The scene was chaotic, without any person obviously in charge or directing the law enforcement response.

    ii. To the extent any officers considered Chief Arredondo to be the overall incident commander, they also should have recognized that was inconsistent with him remaining inside the building.

    iii. There was an overall lackadaisical approach by law enforcement at the scene. For many, that was because they were given and relied upon inaccurate information. For others, they had enough information to know better.

n. Despite obvious deficiencies in command and control at the scene which should have been recognized by other law enforcement responders, none approached Chief Arredondo or any of the officers around him or subordinate to him to affirmatively offer assistance with incident command.

o. Chief Arredondo and the officers around him at the south end of the building were focused on gaining access to the classrooms (through use of a breaching tool, a key, or other means) and protective equipment for officers (through rifle-rated ballistic shields, flashbangs, etc.).

p. Meanwhile, dozens of law enforcement officers were assembling in the hallway on the north side of the building, stacking up for an assault on the classrooms, and mostly waiting for further instructions pending the arrival of protective gear and breaching equipment.

q. While 911 received communications from victims inside Rooms 111 and 112, Chief Arredondo did not learn about it because of his failure to establish a reliable method of receiving critical information from outside the building.

r. Eventually, Chief Arredondo came to understand there probably were casualties inside Rooms 111 and 112. Even if he had received information of surviving injured victims in the classrooms, it is unclear that he would have done anything differently to act "more urgently."

s. U.S. Marshals provided a rifle-rated shield and it arrived around 12:20 p.m., approximately 30 minutes before the classroom was finally breached.

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t.   While officers acted on the assumption that the doors to Rooms 111 and 112 were locked, as they were designed to be, nobody tested that assumption.

u.   Room 111's door probably was not effectively locked shut.

v.   Chief Arredondo did not actually exercise tactical incident command over the BORTAC team, nor did the BORTAC team seek instruction from Chief Arredondo.

w.   By the time the BORTAC team breached the classrooms, the tactical command inside the building had been de facto assumed by BORTAC.

x.   Acting on effectively the same information available to Chief Arredondo, including an assumption of injured victims in the room, the BORTAC commander on scene waited until arranging a rifle-rated shield and obtaining a working master key before attempting to breach the classrooms.

y.   The Committee has not received medical evidence that would inform a judgment about whether breaching the classroom sooner than the approximately 73 minutes that passed between the first responders' initial arrival at the west building and their eventual breach of the classrooms could have been saved lives or mitigated injuries.

    i.   As described above, it is likely that most of the deceased victims perished immediately during the attacker's initial barrage of gunfire.

    ii. However, given the information known about victims who survived through the time of the breach and who later died on the way to the hospital, it is plausible that some victims could have survived if they had not had to wait 73 additional minutes for rescue.

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