

From: andrewburns@juno.com [<mailto:andrewburns@juno.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, January 23, 2013 5:14 PM
To: ASaferConnecticut
Cc: Sen. Kane, Rob
Subject: Thoughts on school safety et al

To: asaferconnecticut@cga.ct.gov

1-23-13

Gentlefolk:

Below is the text of an essay I addressed to the Waterbury Republican-American a week ago. I didn't see it published but I acknowledge that I see the paper only four days a week (Thu- Sun). I commend it to your attention.

Date: January 15, 2013

From: Andrew Burns; andrewburns@juno.com; 203-262-8245
[790B Heritage Village, Southbury, CT 06488-5323]

To: Opinion Page Editor; opinion@rep-am.com

Subject: The Sandy Hook Pathology

[610 words]

In the aftermath of the tragic Sandy Hook School shooting it's only natural that folks of all civilized persuasions should desperately want to "do something" to prevent recurrence of such tragedies. But it's proper to contemplate how well or poorly equipped various folks are to do something constructive.

Two top-of-the-fold, front page, Rep-Am stories on 01/12 focus attention on the matter.

In story #1, we learned, per State Police spokesman Lt. Vance that, four weeks after the event, state police have finished their work at the school but that "we've still got an immense amount of work to do. Our responsibility is to answer all the questions as to what exactly happened."

I must ask: to what purpose?

Such events are (fortunately) extremely rare. The characteristics of premises at which such events might be undertaken are widely variable, and the essentially unbalanced thought processes of would-be perpetrators are extremely unpredictable. It strikes me as highly

improbable that knowing what can't be learned by two or three competent parties in two or three days of on-site study will constructively contribute to the future avoidance of such calamities.

Additional study of the local mechanics of the incident would seem to be an egregious waste of social resources. This becomes obvious when twenty minutes of rational reflection exposes the fact that the single most influential enabler of the horrendous event is the widely publicized declaration that public schools (per nationally legislated folly) have no readily available armed protection.

In story #2, we were advised that "few will have more powerful voices in the national gun control debate than the families of the Newtown shooting victims".

I remark that I had lung surgery a few years ago (things went very smoothly, thank you) but I never suggest to anybody with lung disorder that they should come to me for technical advice on how to deal with such. Why would any rational agency suspect that a randomly selected group of people in a randomly selected part of the nation would be better equipped to deal with insanity, in both individual persons and in legislatures, than professionals who have devoted serious attention to relevant history.

In story #3 (reported elsewhere) we learn of much talk about abandoning Sandy Hook Elementary School as a school. Was the structure unsuited to educating elementary school children on December 13? Could the cost of repairing the damage done to the school on December 14 (and in follow-on activity) be remotely comparable to the cost of building a replacement structure somewhere else? Whyever should we throw away valuable community property?

I must further ask: Is there any rational soul who believes that the surviving pupils of the Sandy Hook school chaos are unaware of what happened at the school on December 14? Could it do those pupils any good to have their parents and teachers behave as though it never happened? Indeed, should we hide from our children the fact that, with all too regular frequency, comparably tragic events are afflicting communities all over the world -- conspicuously in the present middle east? My one answer to these three questions is "No".

My practical recommendation is that we stop boasting to the world that our schools have no armed protection and then, that we stop insisting that our schools must have no armed protection. Compensated "concealed carry" provision for a few school staff members could do wonders for school safety at very modest cost.

Sure, it's entirely appropriate for our community to assist wounded families in dealing with their stunning losses but, for the good of the whole community, its time for the community leadership to start acting like objective grownups.

Andrew Burns, Southbury