

TO: The Early Childhood, Youth and Families subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives' Committee on Education and the Workforce

WRITTEN TESTIMONY FROM: Lyle Welsh

May 17, 1999

The following are my comments:

My wife and I have noticed that people spend time telling children that when they see danger at school to tell an adult like the D.A.R.E. program teaches but when Brooks Brown and his parents, Judy and Randy Brown, told the Jefferson County Sheriff Department information was lost and the Harris and Klebold residences were never searched until after the shooting.

I heard Charlton Heston say in the last two years 6,000 children were caught with guns in school and only 13 were prosecuted. Why so few? More restrictive gun control laws aren't about preventing gun related crime because the Federal Justice Department does not prosecute the existing laws. Additional laws are about gaining more control over our Constitutional rights. Isn't it ironic who the Federal Justice Department has gone after Bill Gates of Microsoft so hard and from what I've heard he hasn't killed one person with a gun. I've heard it said that Eric and Dylan violated about 20 Federal and State gun laws and that did not stop them. I grew up in Western Nebraska with guns available in the home or in the pickup rack and I can't remember ever hearing of a shooting in my schools. We were taught respect for life and firearm safety. Concerning gun control,

even though the grief of the families of those slain at Columbine is unimaginable we need to legislate based on the Constitution and not emotion. If we don't, we do a disservice to our forefathers who died while creating and preserving our Constitutional freedoms.

How can we teach our children respect for life when we slaughter hundreds of thousands of babies each year by abortion for convenience. I've heard the research institute for the Planned Parenthood group found only about 1 % to 5% are done because of rape, incest or the mother's health.

How can we teach our children respect for life when the orphaned cubs of a mountain lion in California get more attention and donated funds than the children of the woman who was killed by the lion?

How can we teach our children respect for authority and laws when they see others getting away with perjury, obstruction of justice, influence peddling, bribery, embezzlement or sexual infidelity.

How many more will be killed before we realize that knowledge without wisdom is destruction. Our schools are becoming killing fields. Some want to eliminate any vestige of religion from our schools but after the tragedy those affected by their grief turned to religion for solace. It is obvious that no matter how many laws or regulations are created they are merely a band aid attempting to cover the true source of the problem which is a continual decline in our personal and family spiritual values.

The following is a variety of comments and opinions from people regarding the shooting incident at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado on April 20, 1999.

The Internet is so powerful it can be abused unless there are some controls put in it like there are for pornography for expressions that have no socially redeeming value. The violent video games and movies have increased the school violence.

The teachers did a great job. How can you plan for something like this? The school Administration is uncaring and unresponsive. Schools need to listen to the students, parents and teachers more. Turn off your TV and get involved with your children and the school system. The open campus is bad. Students can come and go instead of focusing on schoolwork and then security is compromised. There is no justice and no enforcement. Zero tolerance is a joke. Zero enforcement is more like it. Eric Harris made a video of killing athletes and extortion of kid's lunch money. He needed professional help. Low self esteem breeds this hatred. ACLU lawsuits against student punishment increased violence because there is less discipline. We should have a dress code that bans trenchcoats or other baggy coats or pants that can hide dangerous items. School uniforms would be better go gangs couldn't use the way they dress as an identity. The athletes have an attitude of superiority toward the whole school. Some of them are mean, ridicule and are physically abusive to other students. Why is this allowed?

If we agree to give up a little freedom for security by going through a metal detector at the airport shouldn't we do it at schools if needed. Students would feel like they were in jail if the schools used metal detectors and secured more doors. Metal detectors and restricted access doors would increase safety.

If they are willing to further limit our 2nd Amendment Constitutional rights by passing laws requiring background checks on private sales are they willing to pass laws against 1st Amendment Constitutional rights such as hate speech and anti-Christian speech or expression. When guns are outlawed, only outlaws will have guns. If we eliminate guns because they kill people shouldn't we eliminate abortion instruments because they kill far more (millions) of babies? After all the instruments kill babies not doctors! What is sad is that kids bring guns not only to High Schools but also to Junior High and Elementary Schools.