

Dear Elected Officials,

I am writing today in support of Colorado SB13-009. Here is why:

I am an educator in Colorado with over 12 years of experience both as a teacher and as a principal. I have owned, shot, and trained with guns since I was 5 years old. I have a completely clean record and have never had any issues both professionally and personally that would raise any red flag. By law I am required to not only submit to a background check, but also have to be fingerprinted, etc. just to be a teacher.

In the past I have not obtained my Concealed Carry permit simply for the fact that the place I spend most of my time, I am not allowed to carry. I treat my students how I would expect my children to be treated by a teacher. I work every day to ensure their success and ultimately would do anything legal to help a student in any situation. Every morning I watch as parents drop their babies off at my school and I watch as they pick them up. I find satisfaction in knowing I am making a difference and that each and every single day I am doing something to promote the growth, health and safety of the children I have the honor to work with. Most importantly I am grateful that parents trust me, they see me as a suitable adult to interact with their students for countless hours both inside the classroom and out.

On the flip side I am defenseless, when it comes to the most important time for me to help protect and ensure the wellbeing of my students (your babies). I am taught to hide in a corner, turn the lights out, lock the door and keep everything quiet. I am told by policy that my only option is to sit in a corner and hope the police arrive before the gunman is at my door. If the police do not arrive before the gun man I am defenseless. I have only myself to shield the gun man from the 20+ little ones huddled in fear. I can only hope I never have this issue, and in all honesty I probably never will.... But in the case I might, why not allow me the ability to protect myself and those whom I have been entrusted with?

I can only hope that some rational thought comes from this, as I am not a crazed maniac, I am not a monster, I am defenseless educator who takes the great satisfaction in knowing that every day I change the world one student at a time. I take great pride in returning students to their homes healthy, smarter, safer and better off than when they left that morning. The last thing I could ever imagine would the horror and tragedy of losing a student or several students when there was something more that could have been done.

Please take the time to consider what is at stake here. In every school there are many people just like me: responsible, caring, law abiding citizens, who everyday are forced to enter a workplace where they can easily become victims of the worse kind of evil in our society. Allow such citizens to have a meaningful response to such atrocious crime. Allow me the responsibility to protect myself and those who come to me every day to have a better more promising future.

Until then I will continue to lock my door hide, I will pray silently as I huddle my students in a corner and hope that help arrives before it is too late for myself, my kids, my students and all the families of my community.

Sincerely,

Robert Winn