

Time for Wayne LaPierre to Go*

Robert Resnick

Long time National Rifle Association (NRA) leader Wayne LaPierre is an annual featured speaker at the Conservative Political Action Conference (CPAC), an annual event sponsored by the American Conservative Union (ACU), a right wing political activist group.

Speaking less than a week following America's latest gun massacre, the senseless slaughter of 17 students and teachers at Stoneman Douglas High School, LaPierre characteristically clung to extreme positions that have no basis in law or fact. After a pro forma and empty expression of condolence for the victims, LaPierre launched into an inflammatory speech, laced with paranoia and the ludicrous claim of a Socialist effort to take over the American government.

This follows a tried-and-true right-wing tactic – when you are unable to debate, resort to demonizing, labeling anyone not in 100% agreement as subversive. And LaPierre and the gun manufacturers he represents have no logical, legal, or rational response to the overwhelming majority of Americans (including many NRA members) who support strengthening background checks and banning military grade assault weapons, “bump stocks” and high capacity magazines.

LaPierre and the NRA oppose these measures and prevent Congress and many states from even debating them. To the decent people in the NRA who support reasonable safety measures, the time has long passed for you to change leadership that knows only extremism and vitriol. If not, it is time to found another gun rights organization. Follow the lead of corporate America, which has finally realized that while they can support gun rights, they can no longer associate themselves with the NRA's horrible rhetoric and ideological intransigence.

LaPierre's answer to school shootings - to arm teachers - fails in its very inception. A shootout in a school will increase the number of casualties. Arguably, the same could be true with law enforcement confronting the shooter, but at least they are better trained and benefit from reinforced and recurring training as part of their duties. While some teachers have experience with weapons (it is reported that fewer than 3% of teachers in the U.S. have such training), they certainly do not have the current or frequent training of law enforcement. When law enforcement responds, they need to know the only other people with guns are the bad guys. When an event like this occurs, be it in a school or any public place, it is pure pandemonium. Law enforcement personnel rush into a scene of chaos and confusion with many people panicking, trying to get out. As a veteran, I can safely say that no matter how good the training, it is never the same as when it is real. People react differently, and accidents will happen. Even the best trained law enforcement teams suffer a much lower accuracy rate in this type of situation. The risk of killing more students goes up, not down, by arming teachers. Most importantly, teachers oppose this plan.

President Trump called Wayne LaPierre a patriot. Neither man is a patriot. Patriots love their country, unite people, solve problems, and believe in the rule of law. Patriots do not use vitriolic speeches to demonize those who simply have political and policy disagreements. They respect

* A longer version of this article originally appeared on [The Booth](#).

debate rather than vilifying anyone who disagrees.

And the bottom line, as it so often is, involves the mighty dollar. Wayne LaPierre and the NRA are not worried about anyone coming to take away our guns. No, they are worried about gun sales falling. LaPierre does not believe in our freedom and democracy. He does not care about our children. It is time for him to go.

NRA members, if you love America and respect freedom and democracy, replace Wayne LaPierre or replace the NRA.