



Written by [Joe Wolverton, II, J.D.](#) on July 16, 2018

## Lee County, Virginia, School Board Votes to Arm and Train Teachers

The Lee County, Virginia, school board has unanimously approved a proposal that would pay for the arming and training of school teachers in the county.

“The only way to fight a gun if somebody comes through these doors with a gun to shoot our students, is with another gun,” says Michael Kidwell, Lee County School Board chairman.



The vote, which took place Thursday night, makes Lee the first of the Old Dominion’s 95 counties to pursue this path toward protecting its students from armed violence.

According to reports in the local media, teachers will begin receiving their weapons and their training in their use as early as this fall.

The measure met with the approval of the public, as well, according to WJHL TV in Johnson City, Tennessee, a town on the border of Tennessee and Virginia.

“At least it gives us a chance. If we sat there and did nothing, I couldn’t sleep at night. At least we’re trying to do something,” says school board member Rob Hines, the TV news station reports.

There are some in the school district who worry that an increase in the number of weapons will result in an increase in the number of gun-related incidents.

For their part, the school board responds that arming teachers is a fiscally sound plan, cheaper than alternatives such as on-campus resource officers or metal detectors.

Not surprisingly, several teachers have stepped forward, volunteering to be the first to carry a gun at school.

Here’s the story from WJHL:

Many Lee County teachers have already volunteered to be considered for the role of being armed at their school. One former teacher tells News Channel 11 that most teachers would be willing to go face-to-face with a gunman if it meant saving one of their students.

“Sooner or later, it could happen. And like some of the board members said tonight, we need to be prepared if it does,” says Ronald Earley, former Lee County schools teacher and principal.

While there is, as indicated above, widespread support for training and arming teachers, the solution is statist, at the end of the day.

Why must the answer to the tragedy of school shootings be planned and executed by government? Why can’t the people, exercising their natural right of self-defense, choose to carry or not to carry arms? Why must government insinuate itself into every problem, promoting itself as the source of all



solutions?

This is the precise point made by Tom Mullen writing for Foundation for Economic Education (FEE):

The conservative answer to liberal prohibition (oxymoron?) is to “arm and train the teachers.” While no one has come out and suggested mandating teachers carry firearms or be trained in using them, every suggestion seems to suggest “we” (i.e., the government) need to do the arming and training.

Here’s a little newsflash for both sides: the teachers are already armed.

It’s not a matter of arming teachers, but rather to cease disarming them when they report to work.

No, not every teacher carries firearms and perhaps not as high a percentage of teachers do so as the percentage of the general population that carries. But there are over three million teachers in public schools and some percentage of them have concealed carry permits. It would be unlikely that there aren’t at least some members of every faculty in America that have a concealed carry permit.

And there we have it. As “conservatives” and certainly as constitutionalists, we believe the answer to all of society’s ills — economic and social — lies in the power of the people to act in ways conducive to their own safety and their own liberty.

Arming teachers is better than nothing, but removing government from the equation is the only constitutional and free-market solution.

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