

Florida sheriff has ‘game-changer’ plan to arm teachers and end gun-free school zones

Feb 17, 2018 7:34 pm



A Florida sheriff says he has a plan that would be a "game-changer" and possibly prevent future mass shootings on school campuses. (Image source: Fox News screenshot)

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A Florida sheriff has devised a plan to arm teachers and end gun-free school zones – and he wants the program implemented nationwide.

“There has to be a line-of-defense. It’s not something we want to do — it’s something we have to do,” Polk County Sheriff Grady Judd told “Fox and Friends” on Saturday.

What is the plan?

Dubbed the “Sentinel Program,” Judd explained that his department has devised and already implemented a plan that would become a “game-changer” if it was implemented on school campuses nationwide.

The plan is simple: Arm teachers with concealed weapons and train them to effectively defend students should the need ever arise. The program has already been put into action at Southeastern University in Lakeland, Florida, which is in Judd’s jurisdiction.

Judd explained that the process to choose which teachers to arm is extremely vigorous. He told the “Fox and Friends” hosts he only selects teachers with impeccable, crime-free backgrounds. Then, the teachers undergo rigorous training that includes meeting standards beyond those that Florida law enforcement

must maintain. In addition, each selected teacher undergoes intense psychological evaluation.

Only after the teachers successfully complete the training are they honored as “special deputy sheriffs” and allowed to carry concealed weapons on campus.

What did Judd say?

If a program like his was in-place on Wednesday at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, Judd said he believes “everything could have been different.”

“There’s no absolutes in life, but I can tell you this: At least two coaches were killed standing in front of and trying to protect kids. Don’t you believe it would be a game-changer if they had a gun to defend the children?” Judd said, adding:

Here’s the basic math: The average shooter his evil deed in two to five minutes...in fact in Broward County [where the shooting happened], it was three minutes. The average police response is plus five minutes. When 911 is called, the shooter is on the campus reeking havoc — that’s too late. We have got to wake up! Wake up and understand that we have to have more than one, that we have to have specially trained people that have concealed firearms that can run to the threat and protect our children.

Currently, the program has only been implemented in Polk County, Florida, but Judd explained he has presented it to the Florida legislature and Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) and has urged them to take action.

Will the plan be implemented?

Judd told the Fox hosts that he spoke with Scott on Friday about the plan, who vowed to take action, though Judd didn’t elaborate on the conversation. However, he stressed South Florida legislators would be a roadblock to a plan like his from being implemented.