While not a newfound issue, at the turn of the year 2018, mass shootings, particularly in schools, became very frequent all over America. One solution proposed to this issue, was to permit teachers to carry firearms on school property to protect themselves, faculty, and students from would-be school shooters. While this is certainly a means to an end — albeit a nuclear option, at best — there are much simpler ways to combat this problem that America is currently facing.

While school shootings has always been a problem throughout America’s history, at the start of 2018, they were rampant. According to CNN writers Ahmed and Walker, by only the end of May, there were, on average, one school shooting per week in America. Desperate for a solution, the idea of arming teachers across the nation was presented, however the widespread application of metal detectors throughout schools was overlooked. Metal detectors in schools provide a, “First line of defense”, so to speak, from weapons entering a school facility. NYPD school safety agents use tactics such as random screenings, metal detectors, and increased officer presence to help prevent deadly contraband from entering a school facility. According to Zach Winn, a campus safety journalist, over the last three academic years, the NYPD was able to confiscate about 5,846 weapons from NYC schools using these methods. Whether the students in possession of the weapons confiscated intended to use them, NYPD safety agents were able to prevent students of said weapons from using and harming other students.

While metal detectors offer protection at the entrance of the school, their protection actually reaches much further. By this, I mean that metal detectors in schools act as a form of deterrence against would be criminals. According to Dallas Fort Worth Police Chief Joel Fitzgerald, while discussing his plan to protect schools against mass shootings, he speaks on his induction of metal detectors among other methods and how he hopes that it shall deter these types of attacks.

While they are effective, metal detectors aren’t the only way to prevent school shootings. According to Bill Dedmon, an investigative reporter for NBC news, studies were conducted in 2002 by the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education in which they researched other ways to prevent attacks. Researchers studied 37 attacks, and interviewed 10 perpetrators, and concluded that schools should respond “aggressively” to bullying incidents, seeing as they can be used as a motive behind an attack, encourage students to report what they hear, as would be attackers often discuss their plan to other students, as well as pay attention to students making plans or gathering weapons, as these attacks are premeditated.

While arming teachers with firearms has a chance of stopping a shooting turning into a mass one, you have to question “At what price was it worth?”. Students often look to there teachers as a mentor, or even a role model. Students would be hesitant to embrace teachers with these titles, or even trust them if they are armed at all times of their interaction. For teachers to combat against school shooters, their firearm would have to be ready to use at all times. Locking the gun away in a safe, or desk drawer would make this impossible, so to solve this teachers would have to have their gun easily accessible to them, which would in turn, be easily accessible to their students. This then raises a slew of questions and hypotheticals. How would teachers be able to use the restroom without worry? Would students no longer have access to classrooms without a teacher present? Would a teacher with a bad temper brandish their gun to regain control of their class? Would fights between students be broken up with firearms?

Sources Used

1. Ahmed, Saeed, and Christina Walker. “There Has Been, on Average, 1 School Shooting Every Week This Year.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 25 May 2018, www.cnn.com/2018/03/02/us/school-shootings-2018-list-trnd/index.html.
2. Winn, Zach. “NYC School Safety Agents Find 328 Weapons in 3 Months.” *Campus Safety Magazine*, Campus Safety, 4 Oct. 2017, www.campussafetymagazine.com/safety/nyc-school-safety-agents-find-328-weapons-in-3-months/.
3. Smith, Diane, and Anna M Tinsley. “Metal Detectors: Can They Prevent Mass Shootings at Schools?” *Star-Telegram*, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, 26 Feb. 2018, www.star-telegram.com/latest-news/article202156739.html.
4. Dedman, Bill. “Does Every School Need a Metal Detector?” *NBCNews.com*, NBC Universal News Group, 3 Oct. 2006, www.nbcnews.com/id/15111439/#.W7HwhfkpDce.