



## **Washington Post makes wild claim about gun violence — but the facts destroy their narrative**

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The Washington Post printed a bold claim on its front page Saturday, the same day where hundreds of thousands of people descended on Washington to protest gun violence at the “March for Our Lives” gun control rally.

But the claim doesn’t stand up to facts.

What did the Post claim?

Printed on the center of the front page was the number “187,000.” That is the number of children who have been “exposed to gun violence at school since Columbine in 1999,” the Post claimed.

The Post reported: “Beginning with Columbine in 1999, more than 187,000 students attending at least 193 primary or secondary schools have experienced a shooting on campus during school hours, according to a year-long Washington Post analysis.”

The Post is pushing the narrative that gun violence is a growing epidemic on school campuses nationwide. And because of that, hundreds of thousands of school children’s lives will forever be changed.

Unfortunately for the Post, concrete facts show the exact opposite.

What do the facts show?

A study recently conducted by James Alan Fox, a professor of criminology at Northeastern University in Boston, found that school children are much more safe today than they were in the 1990s. His study found there have been only eight “mass shootings” on schools since 1996 if you define a “mass shooting” as a massacre with more than four deaths, not including the gunman.

“Four times the number of children were killed in schools in the early 1990s than today,” Fox said.

In the study, Fox noted that children today are much more likely to die from bicycle accidents or accidental pool drownings than in a mass shooting at school.

Ironically, the Post ran a perspective story on March 8 debunking its own claims:

The Education Department reports that roughly 50 million children attend public schools for roughly 180 days per year. Since Columbine, approximately 200 public school students have been shot to death while school was in session, including the recent slaughter at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla. (and a shooting in Birmingham, Ala., on Wednesday that police called accidental that left one student dead). That means the statistical likelihood of any given public school student being killed by a gun, in school, on any given day since 1999 was roughly 1 in 614,000,000. And since the 1990s, shootings at schools have been getting less common.

The chance of a child being shot and killed in a public school is extraordinarily low. Not zero — no risk is. But it's far lower than many people assume, especially in the glare of heart-wrenching news coverage after an event like Parkland. And it's far lower than almost any other mortality risk a kid faces, including traveling to and from school, catching a potentially deadly disease while in school or suffering a life-threatening injury playing interscholastic sports.

As Michael Cannon of the Cato Institute wrote on Twitter, either “the @washingtonpost is stoking hysteria to sell newspapers and/or using its front page to advance its political agenda.”