

DEPUTY DIDN'T GO IN

4 GOVERNORS ANNOUNCE GUN COALITION

in, addressed the killer, killed the killer.”

The sheriff said he was “devastated, sick to my stomach. There are no words.”

There was also a communication issue between the person reviewing the school’s security system footage and officers who responded to the school.

Coral Springs Police Chief Tony Pustizzi said during a Thursday news conference that the footage being reviewed was 20 minutes old, so the responding officers were hearing that the shooter was in a certain place while officers already in that location were saying that wasn’t the case.

“There was nothing wrong with their equipment. Their equipment works,” Pustizzi said. “It’s just that when the person was reviewing the tape

from 20 minutes earlier, somehow that wasn’t communicated to the officers that it was a 20-minute delay.”

Pustizzi said the confusion didn’t put anyone in danger.

Shooting suspect Nikolas Cruz, 19, has been jailed on 17 counts of murder and has admitted the attack. He owned a collection of weapons. Defense attorneys, state records and people who knew him indicate that he displayed behavioral troubles for years.

Politicians under pressure to tighten gun laws in response to the mass shooting floated various plans Thursday, but most fell short of reforms demanded by student activists who converged Wednesday on Florida’s Capitol. Florida House Speaker Richard Corcoran said Thursday night that his chamber is

going to recommend creating a special commission to investigate the “abject breakdown at all levels” that led to the shooting deaths.

The Republican said the commission, likely to be led by a parent of one of the slain children, would have subpoena power.

Corcoran also said the news about the resource officer’s failure to respond did not dissuade him from moving ahead with what he was calling the “marshal” plan to let local law-enforcement officials train and deputize someone at the school who would be authorized to carry a gun.

“He’s not indicative of the law enforcement community; that’s not going to change our behavior at all,” Corcoran said.

State Sen. Bill Galvano, who

is helping craft a bill in response to the shooting deaths, insisted the idea is not the same as arming teachers. He said the program would be optional and the deputized person would have to be trained by local law-enforcement agencies.

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida said a visit to Stoneman Douglas prompted him to change his stance on large capacity magazines. The Republican insisted he is willing to rethink his past opposition on gun proposals if there is information the policies would prevent mass shootings.

“If we are going to infringe on the Second Amendment, it has to be a policy that will work,” Rubio said in an interview Thursday with The Associated Press.

BY YANCEY ROY

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ALBANY — Four Northeast governors on Thursday announced a new coalition to work together to toughen gun laws in the wake of the Florida school shooting and congressional inaction.

The governors of New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Rhode Island said citizens will not be satisfied by “baby steps” and “political crumbs” such as merely raising the legal purchasing age and banning so-called bump stocks that can turn guns into automatic weapons.

They said they will sign an agreement to share and collaborate on gun violence research and statistics gathering to fill in a federal void. Dubbing their group “States for Gun Safety,” they said they would invite other states to join and also will pressure Congress to act.

“Right now, you have the high school students showing more leadership than the leaders in Washington,” New York Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo said in a conference call, referring to the students of Parkland, Florida, where 17 people were killed last week.

He said other nations have confronted the issue of mass shootings and automatic weapons, but the United States has failed. He noted the U.S. outlawed machine guns in



Cuomo



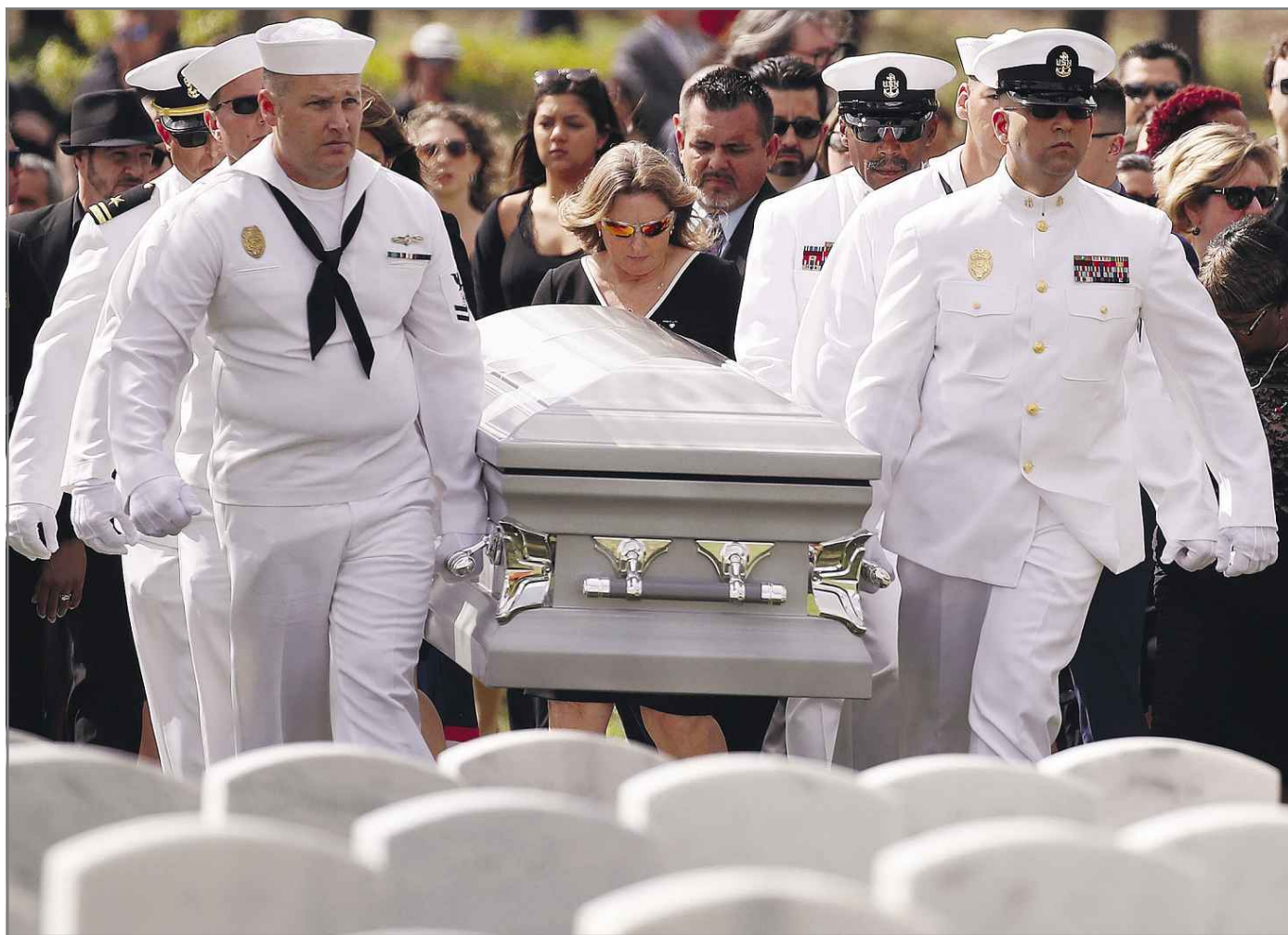
Malloy



Raimondo



Murphy



GETTY IMAGES NORTH AMERICA / JOE RAEDLE

Hart's focus: Opioids, gangs

Newly named police commish to 'build on' efforts

BY NICOLE FULLER
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Suffolk Police Commissioner-designee Geraldine Hart said Thursday she will "build on" what she described as the department's recent success in combating gangs and the opioid scourge that have collectively killed hundreds of people on Long Island.

Hart, 50, of Sea Cliff, the senior supervisory resident agent in the Long Island office of the FBI, announced no new initiatives Thursday as she made her public debut during a news conference in Hauppauge. Instead she said she would improve on the department's ongoing performance by drawing on her own long experience in law enforcement as well as consulting with veteran police brass.

"By every measure the Suffolk County Police Department is doing a better job now than anytime in history," Hart said. "So with that in mind, I want to continue with the priorities of eradicating opioids, eradicating gangs, MS-13 in particular."

County Executive Steve Bellone introduced Hart as his choice for top cop, saying her "integrity" and experience vaulted her to the top of the heap of more than 100 candidates. Officials said applicants included those from Suffolk and Nassau police departments and the NYPD, as well as other states.



Geraldine Hart, with Steve Bellone, left, greets Suffolk County workers after a Hauppauge news conference. ■ Video: [newsday.com/suffolk](https://www.newsday.com/suffolk)

"Gang issues, drug issues, the opioid epidemic, violent crime — these are all things she has tremendous expertise in," Bellone said.

While police and federal authorities have arrested and prosecuted scores of gang members following a series of high-profile MS-13 killings on Long Island, federal authorities estimate there are still some 2,000 members of the gang on Long Island.

And more than 400 people died of opioid overdoses — a record — in the county last year, according to official projections.

Bellone also on Thursday named Chief Stuart Cameron, the highest-ranking uniformed officer in the department, as acting commissioner.

Once Hart begins working in the department in mid-April, she'll have that title until the Legislature confirms her ap-

pointment. Cameron will then return to his role as chief of department.

Bellone lavished praise on Cameron, a 33-year department veteran, who would not say whether he had applied for the commissioner spot.

"The accomplishments we've seen over the last couple of years . . . that's because of his work and his service," said Bellone.

The announcement of Hart,

who has led the FBI office in Melville since 2014, came on the same day that a federal indictment was unsealed against Rob Walker, long a top aide to former Nassau County Executive Edward Mangano, on allegations that he lied to the FBI. Mangano is also under federal indictment and facing trial next month on corruption charges.

Hart wouldn't comment on Walker's case.

Governors plan multistate gun task force

GUNS from A5

the 1930s, but said it has gone backward since by allowing the sale of military-style weapons, such as the AR-15.

Cuomo blasted the notion of arming schoolteachers, saying that's what the National Rifle Association wants. "The goal is to not make schools armed camps," he said.

The coalition, the governors said, would create a multistate task force to trace and intercept illegal guns in the region, share

information about individuals prohibited from purchasing firearms, share intelligence about gun crimes and designate certain universities to form the first "Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium."

Other governors noted their states have some of the nation's toughest gun laws — and lowest rates of gun violence.

"We want to send a powerful message to the entire country that it's possible to strengthen gun laws and save lives," said Rhode Island Gov. Gina Rai-

mondo. New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and Connecticut Gov. Dan Malloy also participated in the conference call.

"Gun violence is not a New Jersey problem, a New York problem, a Connecticut problem, a Rhode Island problem, or a problem for any particular state or region — it is a national problem," Murphy added.

On the same day, National Rifle Association executive vice president and CEO Wayne LaPierre denounced Cuomo and half a dozen other

Democrats as "European socialists," according to multiple reports. Addressing a conference of the Conservative Political Action Committee, LaPierre sought to portray Democrats who are pushing for tighter gun control as anti-freedom.

"If they seize power, if these so-called 'European socialists' take over the House and the

Senate, and God forbid they get the White House again, our Americans' freedoms could be lost and our country will be changed forever."

Afterward, Cuomo issued a response accusing LaPierre and the NRA as "peddling lies."

"If Wayne LaPierre is attacking you, you know you're doing something right," the New York governor said. "I am proud of my F rating from the NRA, and I will continue to do everything I can to keep New Yorkers and our children safe."

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