

EDITORIAL

Young people take up gun fight

Nation must listen to these survivors

These students feel they are fighting for their lives. In the wake of last week's school attack in Florida, teens are demanding an end to the mass killings that so often target them as victims. That passion is reshaping the debate, mobilizing their elders and inspiring hope that our nation can break out of its paralysis on gun violence. These students, most not old enough to legally buy a beer, are putting the National Rifle Association and its supporters on notice that they will take their fight to the streets and the legislative halls. Shamefully, those who front for the NRA's goals of unrestricted access to weapons are demonizing this generation, which has had enough. Last week, 17 people were shot to death by a teen gunman at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, in Parkland, Florida. It is a scene the nation has seen repeatedly, yet one that played out as never before. These students were texting, tweeting, Instagramming and posting video even as shots were fired. And they haven't stopped.

The nation, especially the students' contemporaries, experienced their fear, anger and courage in real time. And when it was over, the nation began to hear these students' furious demands for change in real time, too. Stoneman Douglas students who survived spoke out on Saturday, and the nation heard. Emma Gonzalez said, "We call B.S." to the argument that nothing can be done. David Hogg exhorted the crowd to, "Get out there and vote."

The pro-gun forces have tried to discredit these kids as Democratic plants or stooges of activist parents. It's a move that's been effective only in unmasking the critics' cynicism and desperation.

Now President Donald Trump, who relies on gun supporters as well as his keen sense of public opinion, says he supports improving federal background checks.



AP/GETTY IMAGES / RHONA WISE

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School student Emma Gonzalez speaks at a rally on Saturday.

By late Tuesday, he had ordered the Justice Department to propose regulations to ban bump stocks, which increase the rate of gunfire in semiautomatic weapons like the one used to kill 58 people in Las Vegas in October.

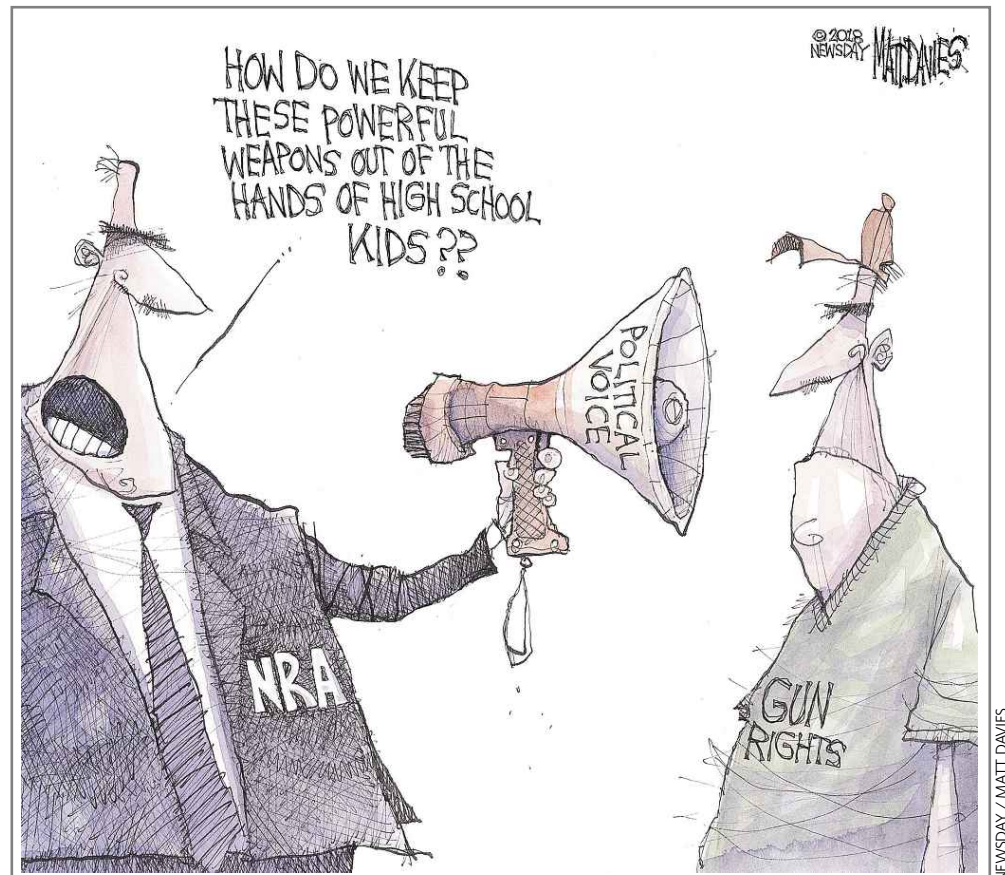
A group called Teens for Gun Reform held a "lie-in" near the White House on Monday that featured 17 young people lying on the ground as if dead for three minutes to symbolize how long it took Nikolas Cruz to kill that many people.

A student walkout is set for noon Wednesday. Another is planned for March 14, one month after Parkland. The March for Our Lives is planned for March 24 in Washington. And on April 20, the 19th anniversary of the shootings in Columbine, Colorado, the school massacre that kicked off this cycle of pain, a walkout is planned that has attracted the pledged support of tens of thousands of students.

The United States doesn't have to lead the world in mass shootings, gun suicides, gun homicides or the ease with which people planning mayhem can acquire firearms. This can change via tougher laws and healthier attitudes. As the young people who will inherit this nation demand that change, we must listen, and it must come. — *The editorial board*

CLARIFICATION: Law enforcement officials say they do not have evidence to support a claim by the leader of a white supremacist militia in Florida that Parkland high school shooter Nikolas Cruz trained with the group. Friday's editorial about the massacre included the group's claim.

MATT DAVIES



■ See more Matt Davies cartoons: newsday.com/matt

LETTERS

Wind power can be a boon to NY State

New York's elected officials have pledged to make New York a leader in renewable energy, with the goal of generating at least half of our electricity from renewable sources by 2030 ["State's wind power plan," News, Jan. 29]. But less than 3 percent of the state's energy production currently comes from solar and wind, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

While New York produces one-fifth of its energy through large-scale hydropower facilities, Niagara Falls and other hydro plants cannot meet downstate New York's needs.

There is still work to do. Even taking into account the South Fork wind project, which would be the largest in the nation, and Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo's pledge to put into motion an additional 800 megawatts of wind by 2019,

New York would still fall short of its 2030 goal.

The state Energy Research and Development Authority's Offshore Wind Master Plan adds to the volumes of research predicting economic and environmental benefits that wind farms will bring to Long Islanders.

Kevin Dugan,
Garden City

Editor's note: The writer is a researcher for the New York Public Interest Research Group, a nonprofit advocacy organization.

Embassy move had big support in Senate

The Rev. Raymond A. Schroth maintains in his opinion piece that President Donald Trump's decision to move the U.S. embassy to Jerusalem was ill-advised ["In Mideast, consider shared humanity," Feb. 15].

The decision was a result

of the 1995 Jerusalem Embassy Act. That law had bipartisan support and was passed in the Senate by 93-5, with all but one Democrat voting yes.

The law called for the embassy to be moved from Tel Aviv by 1999. Citing national security since then, presidents repeatedly invoked a six-month waiver to delay the move.

Palestinians are still calling for the destruction of Israel. Until that edict is retracted, the Israelis have maintained that there can be little hope for any progress toward a two-state solution. To say the U.S. embassy move by Trump was ill-advised is somewhat disingenuous when one considers the overwhelming support by the elected officials of the American people.

Lawrence Beufve,
Lindenhurst