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School safety responses

Submitted via email.

*In the past two weeks, we have seen two large student protests at the Statehouse regarding school security and gun violence. But some have criticized these protests, especially on the national level. What is your general impression of the tone and the message of the student protests, particularly in Idaho?*

While participating in civil discourse is always good to see and is part of our First Amendment rights, I think in this case it is misguided and in some cases stoked by others to advance their political agenda on impressionable young students. What is more disheartening is seeing what appears to be a failure to teach some of our students history, our constitutional rights, and how to differentiate between a symptom and disease.

*The demonstrators have, to a large degree, called for gun control. Is there a place for gun control, in any form, as part of a state strategy on school safety? Specifically, are there measures you would support, or measures you would oppose?*

I do not believe gun control is the answer to our problem. We need to treat the root cause and not the symptoms. We have societal challenges and mental health issues that need to be addressed by everyone involved and as usual all things cannot be solved by more government.

*In your view, has the state of Idaho done enough to keep its schools safe? If not, what would be your top priority? What would a school safety plan look like in your administration?*

No parent should ever have to worry about their child going to school and returning home safely. We must constantly evaluate and find ways to improve school safety. We need to build upon what the current administration is doing by working closely with law enforcement to ensure they have the tools they need to coordinate closely with our schools, expand the use of modern technology protection tools that exist, consider physical hardening of our schools where it makes sense, work with schools on strong safety protocols and look at other preventative measures including arming properly trained teachers and having resource officers in every school.

*Should the state do more — and allocate more resources — to add school resource officers or other employees to “harden” school sites?*

Yes, I think we should look at placing resource officers in every school.

*Should the state do more to encourage or enable schools to arm teachers or other staffers? Do you believe such moves would make schools safer?*

Yes, school districts already have the option to make this choice and I think they should be encouraged to do so. I believe this will help make schools safer.

*To what extent do you believe the school safety issue is a component of confronting issues such as bullying? If so, is there anything your administration would do differently to address the issue of bullying?*

Bullying should never be tolerated. It is crucial that our kids can go to school and feel safe from any threat especially bullying. The key to stopping bullying lies with our good principals, teachers, resource officers and parents.I will always be open to good ideas from our local schools and communities on how we can continue to address this issue.