

More details on police response come into focus as survivors testify on Uvalde massacre

Chase Lawrence
9 June 2022

Testimony was heard Wednesday before a Congress committee on the Robb Elementary School shooting in Uvalde, Texas, and on the racist shooting at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York. The testimony provided heart-wrenching details from various witnesses of the massacre of 19 children and two teachers on May 24.

An 11-year-old who survived the Uvalde massacre, in a pre-recorded video, detailed how she had to cover herself in her classmates' blood and pretend to be dead in order to avoid being shot herself. A pediatrician who treated many of the victims described to lawmakers how he saw children's bodies "pulverized" and "decapitated" by bullets fired from a semiautomatic AR-15 rifle.

While providing heart-wrenching testimony to the brutality of the attack, noticeably absent was anyone called by the committee to speak to the deeper social roots of the Uvalde and Buffalo shootings and the phenomenon of mass shootings in general.

Most of the rest of the hearing revolved around worn-out calls for gun regulation, with calls for a ban on assault rifle-style weapons and high-capacity magazines. The testimony was predictably used by the Democratic Party to call on the Republicans to support gun control. The Republicans, who a more than a year ago attempted to murder many of their Democratic colleagues in a coup d'état, many of the leading ones having just attended a National Rifle Association (NRA) rally, unsurprisingly were unmoved by Democrats.

The bills on gun control proposed directly after the hearing, such as raising the age limit to 21 for the sale of semiautomatic rifles and banning magazines carrying more than 10 cartridges, were little more than a public-relations stunt for the Democratic Party which knew well beforehand that they would fail, with the *New York Times* writing, "The bills are all but certain to go nowhere in the evenly divided Senate, where solid Republican opposition means that they cannot draw the 60 votes needed to break

through a filibuster."

Translated, the Democrats have no intention to follow through with their own piecemeal gun control measures. The Democrats, with the presidency, House, and 50 percent of the Senate, can legally eliminate the filibuster, but refuse to as it would remove their tried-and-true excuse for inaction and moving further to the right. Additionally, some measures such as a section banning magazines carrying 15 cartridges or more, were met with opposition from within the Democratic Party itself with four Democrats opposing it while four Republicans supported it.

The Democrats themselves have candidates running who have been given the seal of approval by the NRA, making clear that their grandstanding over gun violence and calling for gun control measures are a farce and a political gimmick. Sitting US Representative Henry Cuellar, of Texas, has been given an "A" rating by the NRA and is being backed by the Democratic Party for re-election.

On Tuesday, one of the teachers who survived the shooting in Uvalde, Amulfo Reyes, relayed his terrifying experience to ABC News. Reyes called the police "cowards" for their inaction, saying he will "never forgive them." Reyes is recovering from being shot twice by the gunman once through the arm and lung and another hitting him in the back. He was shot just as the gunman entered the room, having instructed his students to hide under their desks and pretend to be asleep.

The shooter at Robb Elementary, Salvador Ramos, entered classroom 112 at 11:33 a.m., then made his way into the connected classroom, 111, opening fire.

According to the police, seven officers were in the building by 11:35 a.m., but they retreated after taking gunfire. Reyes stated that a student cried out for officers to save her in room 112 saying "Officer! Officer! We are in here!" but her cries met were met with silence as the

officers were already gone. Following this, the gunman got up from behind Reyes's desk, walked to the room, and shot the student.

A child called 911 from room 112 at 12:03 p.m., at which point 19 police officers were inside the building, but no officers went in to confront the shooter, instead asking the gunman to talk, which he did not.

Following this, more 911 calls were made at 12:10, 12:13, and 12:16 p.m. from within classroom 112.

In a recording obtained by ABC News, a police dispatcher can be heard saying "is anybody inside the building? Child is advising he is in the room full of victims. Full of victims at this moment."

More 911 calls were made, including from Reyes's classroom, but police did not intervene until 12:50 p.m., an hour and 17 minutes after the gunman entered the classrooms. At this point, Border Patrol agents entered the classroom and killed the gunman.

Reyes told ABC News that he felt abandoned by the police and expressed anger. Referring to the police he said, choking back tears, "you have a bulletproof vest, I had nothing. You're supposed to protect and serve, and there is no excuse for their actions, and I will never forgive them. I will never forgive them."

All 11 students in Reyes's classroom were killed. Reyes said that no training could have prepared the school for the shooting, even though the school had extensive protocols relating to school shooters.

Meanwhile, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has warned of a "domestic violent extremist" who praised the Uvalde shooting on online forums and called for at least one copycat attack, warning of a "heightened" threat environment in its National Terrorism Advisory System Bulletin on Tuesday. According to the Anti-Defamation League, fascists had a similar response to the Buffalo attack.

It also warned of other extremists who "seized on the event to attempt to spread disinformation and incite grievances, including claims it was a government-staged event meant to advance gun control measures." The false-flag claim is one that was spread most notably by fascist conspiracy theorist Alex Jones in response to the Sandy Hook shooting, which he later was forced to apologize for per a court order. Jones is deeply implicated in Trump's January 6 coup attempt, admitting to pleading the Fifth Amendment "almost 100 times" before the January 6 Committee.

The DHS bulletin also mentioned that "Some domestic violent extremists have expressed grievances related to

their perception that the US government is unwilling or unable to secure the US-Mexico border and have called for violence to stem the flow of undocumented migrants to the United States."

All of the aforementioned intentionally vague statements by the DHS no doubt refer to the far right, many of whom reside in the Republican Party or in its orbit (not to mention the DHS itself), who have a long history of praising shooters, including praising the shooters in the Columbine High School massacre. The 2018 Christchurch, New Zealand, terrorist attack, and more recent mass shooting in Buffalo, New York, were committed by fascists and were political crimes. Both were praised by fascists afterward.

These are the only such people whose politics calls for shootings, with many fascist gunmen having committed mass murders in the United States as well as internationally. It is not clear as of this writing whether Ramos had any political motive.

The Democrats' attempt at explaining away shootings because of guns being available is woefully inadequate to explain the phenomenon of mass shootings. The sorts of rifles used in the shootings are nothing new, with the AR-15 having predated the M16 rifle and being available for civilian purchase for well over half a century (not to mention various other semiautomatic firearms widely available to the American public). Despite this, mass shootings are a more recent feature of American society that have accelerated within the past three decades of continuous war during which millions were massacred abroad and greatly accelerating within the past few years corresponding with the COVID-19 pandemic, in which the American ruling class intentionally let more than 1 million people die. This is no coincidence.

Never-ending war, austerity, the destruction of the social safety net and jobs all contributed to a deep social crisis that produces such outburst of violence. To address the source of the shootings requires a fight against capitalism itself, which generates the social conditions that lead to such tragedies as were seen at the elementary school in Uvalde and the grocery store in Buffalo.



To contact the WSWS and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact