

Central Bucks Students Protest Gun Violence

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Students from Central Bucks High School and other local schools protested with signs and speeches against the seemingly never-ending cycle of school shootings in front of the Newtown office of Representative Brian Fitzpatrick (R-8th District), as young people across the country continue their demonstrations highlighting the problem of gun violence

"I am 14 years old, and I live in a country where I have to come out and I have to talk about how I'm afraid that I'm going to get killed and how I feared going to school after this happened," said one student, a member of the Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition Committee.

"We are... a group of concerned, and frankly, frustrated, Central Bucks High School students. We are the children of your constituents, and although we cannot vote, inaction affects us directly... since 2010, there has been an average of one mass shooting per week. Let's be clear: there is nothing normal about this."

Despite the rainy weather, around 50 people showed up at the February 23 rally, holding signs with the slogans "Thoughts and Prayers are Not Enough," "Take Care of America," and "#DitchFitz," a reference to efforts by local groups such as Fridays With(out) Fitzpatrick to vote the Representative out of office.

All three Democratic Party candidates competing in the primary to run against Fitzpatrick – Steve Bacher, Rachel Reddick and Scott Wallace – were present for the protest.

Many students and families were concerned about additional issues as well.

"I came here today because they're just too many things wrong happening in our country right now and just simply saying something or blasting out on social media isn't enough," said Baley, a student activist with the Bucks County Women's Advocacy Committee. "We need action, we don't just need words...it's a major crisis in our country now," the protestors said. "Month after month, we have mass shootings...there are so many guns out there, assault rifles, designed for the military, not for the streets."

"Children just need to be protected, and the president's idea for teachers to have guns is ridiculous

In the midst of the speeches and chants, Fitzpatrick employees let small groups of protestors into his office. He has since focused on bullying and "gun safety" as ways to stop future school shootings.

When interviewed, most high-school aged students said that Sandy Hook was the first mass shooting that they remember hearing about. Some of them even had friends in Newtown, Connecticut, at the time.

Many people in attendance demanded that those convicted of domestic violence be prohibited from owning a gun. This has become a focus of activist groups throughout the country, with Washington state voting 94-4 to further restrict weapons for those convicted of this crime.

In Pennsylvania, state senator Tom Killion is attempting to close a loophole where a person convicted of domestic violence can give their weapon to a family member or friend rather than law enforcement.