

# A plan to harden soft targets

BY ROBERT A. LOVINGOOD

What does it take to stop a bad guy with a gun? A good guy with a gun.

Society relies on the armed forces and law enforcement to protect us from those that would do us harm. But mass shootings are changing how we think about security, and we need to make a strategic shift.

The perpetrators of the Dec. 2 mass shootings in San Bernardino were determined to commit evil upon defenseless innocents. In a matter of minutes, they murdered 14 people, wounded 21 and traumatized many others. And there was nothing, nothing at all to stop the killers during their brief but devastating rampage. What finally did stop them was “good guys with guns.”

San Bernardino County has increased Sheriff’s security patrols and strengthened private security at County buildings. Those are good first steps. But we need to expand protections across all of our communities.

Empowering the People to protect themselves is a good place to start.

That’s why I am advocating for a policy change to allow volunteers among the County’s workforce to be trained and authorized to carry concealed weapons and have access to weapons at County facilities. If the Board of Supervisors were to adopt this policy, these volunteers would undergo training and background requirements to obtain a concealed weapons permit issued by the Sheriff under state law as well as additional requirements.

Among these volunteers within the County workforce, we should start with those with prior military service. They have already proven themselves in weapons training, practice and in many instances have combat experience. The temperament and grit that comes with military service adds to their value as first-line defenders.

We should also consider strategically located weapons caches at County facilities. These could be secured in biometric safes with fingerprint locks, ensuring that only authorized individuals have access.

Furthermore, I am encouraging responsible, law-abiding citizens to consider applying for a concealed weapons permit through your local police department. Residents can apply online through the San Bernardino County Sheriff’s Department. Applicants must be at least 21 and complete a California Department of Justice application, residence history form and employment history form. Applicants must also be able to demonstrate “good moral character” and undergo fingerprinting, a personal interview with law enforcement and a background investigation.

By state law, applicants must also undergo a firearms safety course. CCW permit fees are about \$354. Application information is available at <http://cms.sbcounty.gov/sheriff/Home.aspx>.

As was the case Dec. 2, terrorists and criminals can strike defenseless civilians before law enforcement can arrive. So when seconds count, responsible armed citizens can act immediately to cut short a disaster. Armed civilians also deter crime. And research indicates that law-abiding citizens carrying concealed weapons do not increase gun crimes or deadly gun accidents.

Make no mistake: This is not a call for vigilantism. This is a call for self-defense under the law.

Gun-free zones can’t provide protection from killers. And killers are the problem, not good, honest, responsible people who are armed. When every second counts, well-trained, armed citizens can save lives. In the recent surge of terrorist stabbings in Israel, the government encouraged citizens to carry firearms under the law. That has been an effective deterrent.

After terrorists murdered 67 people at a mall in Kenya in 2013, Interpol Secretary General Ronald Noble said in an interview, “You have to ask yourself, ‘Is an armed citizenry more necessary now than it was in the past with an evolving threat of terrorism?’

In my view, the clear answer is yes.

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