

In the fall of last year there were rumors of a shooting happening here at Timpview. Students whose desks were vandalized with threats were called to the office to see if they had any information. Emails were sent out by the administration to inform families and many students did not come to school that day. But the morning of October 4, I hugged my family members, told my friends I loved them and showed up at school, despite being terrified for what might happen. I've never felt more relieved than leaving school that day unharmed. Thanks to the efforts of administration and police, we were safe.

But we got lucky. Not all schools get a warning. Not all victims get a chance to hug their families or to say, "I love you" one last time. The students and staff who showed up at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February 14 were going to learn and work. But instead they lost their lives. Alyssa, Scott, Martin, Nicholas, Aaron, Jaime, Chris, Luke, Cara, Gina, Joaquin, Alaina, Meadow, Helena, Alex, Carmen and Peter. We will remember.

We are required by law to come to school. Required to put ourselves in a place that is unsafe, a place where we could lose our loved ones and our lives. For the 5,000 hours of high school it takes to reach graduation there is little protection standing between us and the end of a gun. The law is not protecting us in a place where it demands us to be.

It is past the time for change. We cannot let anymore innocent lives be lost. We cannot let anymore fear remain in the halls of schools or in the minds of students. Today we walkout for our lives and for the lives of anyone who chose not to walk. Today we stand for the victims of gun violence, and with the hope that no more lives are senselessly taken. Today we stand for a safer America. Speak out. Stand up. Demand change.