

STAFF EDITORIAL

# It could've been us.

We have alarms on our doors and police in our halls. We have emergency drills and classrooms that lock from the inside out. Why don't we feel secure?

Since the first widely publicized school shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, safety precautions have been taken to both prevent and plan for a similar occurrence. It's the thing that schools throughout the nation fear, and an anxiety that is present in both students and teachers.

This fear is justified and reaffirmed by a continued epidemic of mass shootings in America. Since the deadly shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary school in Newtown, Conn. in 2012, more than 400 people have been shot in over 200 school shootings across the nation.

Though much has changed since 2012, gun violence has been a constant.

It feels as though our government has abandoned us. Children are dying as legislators stand idly by, responding to Political Action Commit-

tee (PAC) dollars over the cries of children. We're legally mandated to attend school, yet we go unprotected, unable to match the millions of dollars the PACs have to donate.

We too have a count, not in dollars but in bodies. Students, children, gunned down in schools. 14 students and 3 teachers died in the recent shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

The "thoughts and prayers" never seem to translate into action, and neither do tweets. Both are insufficient in the face of repeated and anticipated tragedy. They are temporary fixes to an enduring problem.

We expect these shootings now. The news notification is no longer a surprise.

The pleas of mothers, and fathers, and friends that've lost loved ones become one echo that we've heard so often. We are sympathetic, but we are tired.

We do what we can, and we know what to look for. We know where

to hide so that someone peeking through the window in a classroom door can't see us. We know to speak in hushed tones.

There is a line between precaution and assumption. During times such as these, times in the wake of a school shooting 1,700 miles away that still feels so close, that line can become blurred. It is the role of adults, of the administration, to know how to handle these situations.

They do it well, the best they can.

The alarms on the doors, which were originally cause for annoyance among students, now somehow seem more necessary. The efforts by the administrator to make us feel safe, and to ensure our safety whether we agree with their tactics or not, are commendable.

Lunches out, an open campus, are luxuries student's have desperately wanted, but long been denied. In the weeks following a mass shooting, though, the building's security concerns feels comforting rather than

suffocating.

Though these safety measures aren't a solution, sweeping reform of federal gun laws and mental health funding are beyond the powers of our school. Instead, HHS mediates between the student body and the broader world.

On the day following the shooting, Mr. Doug Bullinger, principal, spoke to the school over the loudspeaker.

"Could something like what happened in Florida happen here? No question, but we're doing everything we can to deter it, and will likely increase our safety measures in the coming weeks. In the meantime, take an extra moment to be kind to one another, and know that you are a valued member of the Hopkins community," Bullinger said.

The announcement served as a reminder that even if politicians in Washington are unable to unite in the prevention of school shootings, we can find solace in each other.

## Hear our voices.



"I was pretty depressed and the fact that the shooting happened on Valentine's Day made the situation worse. It is supposed to be about love and the shooting obviously did not reflect compassion. It killed the happiness of the day."

*Emily Beard, junior*



"I want to see the government open their eyes and realize that they can't be selling assault rifles or automatic weapons or high powered weapons that are small enough and concealable enough for kids to put in their backpacks or lockers."

*Hugh Day, sophomore*



"Honestly, I've never really heard of what we would do if something like that were to happen here...I feel like for the most part we are [safe], but a shooting like that could happen anywhere."

*Nyakim Tut, junior*



"It feels like adults are letting us down. We as youth are extremely powerful; in two weeks we've already made so much change, and we have no intention of stopping."

*Joe Ramlet, sophomore*

## Take action.



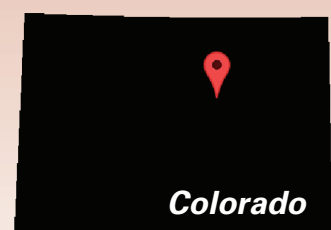
**MARCH 14**

HHS students walked out for 17 minutes, one for each victim of the shooting in Parkland.



**MARCH 24**

Students from all around the country will march in Washington, D.C. in the March for Our Lives.



**APRIL 20**

A second walkout is planned to mark the mass shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado 19 years ago.