



## Yuma County Sheriff's Office

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# PRESS RELEASE

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## Sheriff Wilmot's Open Letter in the Wake of Robb Elementary School Tragedy

**Location of Incident:** Yuma County, AZ

Yuma County Sheriff Leon Wilmot has issued the following statement in response to the recent tragedy that took place at Robb Elementary School:

In January of 2013, I submitted an open letter in the wake of the Sandy Hook Elementary School Tragedy. Nearly 8 ½ years later, we once again find ourselves horrified by a senseless tragedy perpetrated by a deranged individual. As I look at this most recent horrific event, I see a common theme; political figures demanding action, lamenting 'gun violence' while seeking to conceal their own failure to take any meaningful action. There is an underlying root cause of all of these tragedies and, in spite of what seems to dominate the news cycle, banning guns does nothing to address the true underlying issue. The real cause of these tragedies is the decay of societal morals, and the dismal approach to addressing mental health treatment in this nation.

For years, many in congress have capitalized on these tragedies to further their own personal and political agendas. In spite of ample opportunity, they have repeatedly refused to acknowledge or address the mental health crisis. Many of these same politicians have also endlessly promoted 'Defund Police' campaigns and advocate for removing police officers from schools, again to serve their own ideological and political agendas. These are also the same politicians behind the so-called 'criminal justice reform' which in practice has resulted in hundreds of dangerous offenders being released back onto the streets to further victimize honest, law-abiding citizens. Again and again, a politician seeking the spotlight demands gun control.

As you will read below, my statement from 2013 still rings true today in the wake of this most recent tragedy in Uvalde. Our elected officials in congress need to quit blaming inanimate objects for the

decay we see in society and act to address the overwhelming mental health crisis that serves as the single common thread in each of these horrific events.

*\*January 23, 2013*

*As your Yuma County Sheriff, I am sickened and heartbroken by the recent mass murders of innocent victims at the hands of violent criminals. Like all Americans, I wish for justice to be served upon those responsible for perpetrating these horrible crimes. I also pray that the families of those victims receive peace in this time of tragedy.*

*As a law enforcement officer, I have dedicated my life to defending our community and residents against all evil that would be perpetrated upon them by criminals. Like all law enforcement officers, I am bound by solemn oath to uphold the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution and laws of the State of Arizona, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same and to defend them from all enemies, foreign and domestic.*

*As our nation struggles to find answers to the problems that lead a very few among us to commit these senseless criminal acts, I am gravely concerned that some would further victimize the multitude of honest, law abiding citizens, through misguided and uninformed decisions intended to prevent future acts of violence. As your Sheriff and a citizen of the State of Arizona and the United States of America, I firmly support the Bill of Rights, to include the Second Amendment. Through my own experience, I have learned that any such misguided attempt to limit the access of violent criminals to the tools they would use to commit these crimes only serves one purpose, to prevent the honest law abiding citizens access to the means to defend themselves. I must question the motives of those in positions of authority who would set aside the clear principles this nation was founded upon and capitalize on tragedy in order to further their own agenda. I disagree with those who believe that American Citizens should be prevented access to particular types of firearms, that through their ignorance or willful intent, they have determined to be responsible for the atrocities committed upon our citizens by criminals. A firearm is a tool and as such is incapable of independent action. The manner in which that tool is used is entirely dependent on the individual who wields it.*

*As your Sheriff, I am committed to enforcing the laws of the State of Arizona. I will continue to do so aggressively and impartially. I have yet to find any criminal act committed with a firearm that is not already sufficiently outlawed by existing statute. The creation and imposition of new regulations by our Federal Government, either via congress or executive order, on our rights granted by the Second Amendment would be foolish and misguided and serve only to criminalize honest, law abiding citizens. I am a strong proponent of investigating the underlying causes of these recent tragedies and working together to address those shortcomings with real solutions. I am a strong proponent of enforcing existing laws and holding those who choose to violate those laws accountable for their actions. I am a strong proponent of an honest law abiding citizen's right to defend themselves and their families and will not suffer any infringement upon those rights.*

**Information Released By: Sheriff Leon Wilmot**