

# Gronik campaign: Gronik Encounters Chance Meeting With Stoneman Douglas High School Students

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**MILWAUKEE** - [On Sunday, Democratic gubernatorial candidate Andy Gronik had a chance meeting on a flight from Tampa to Ft. Lauderdale with some of the courageous survivors of the Stoneman Douglas High School mass slaughter.](#) These students, teachers, parents, and first responders were returning from the historic march in Washington D.C. to advocate for the gun safety reforms needed to help prevent future mass shootings.

“When the pilot announced we were flying with students from Stoneman Douglas, the applause rang out loud and long,” said Andy Gronik. “These young heroes are doing what no politician or advocacy group has ever been able to do — take on the BS in politics and the NRA — an organization which has bought and paid for politicians’ inaction on gun safety reform. They’re demanding the kind of common-sense changes that will keep our kids and residents safe from escalating gun violence — I admire them more than I can express.”

When the Southwest flight reached cruising altitude, Andy went to the back of the plane to offer the students his condolences, congratulate them for their courage, and encourage them never to be silenced until they achieved the common-sense reforms they seek. He took with him a printout of the [Gun Reform Issues Page](#) from his website and solicited input from the students. “What an incredible group of young people,” Gronik said. “Not only did they welcome the conversation about gun reform and embrace the solutions I am advocating for Wisconsin, but they also made some excellent suggestions. One of the students suggested I consider a ‘Baker Act equivalent? or some kind of gun restraining order?’ Another suggested adding ‘and National’ to my suggested solution of ‘Funding a complete upgrade and integration of data platforms used by local and state law enforcement agencies to increase the effectiveness of every aspect of crime prevention including decking

crimes.’”

“And, it didn’t stop there,” continued Gronik. “These brave kids, teachers, parents, and first responders also shared with me their personal stories about the terror of the deadly shootings and the actions taken in the aftermath of the event. Sisters who both fled the school in the midst of the code red somehow found one another as they frantically ran home trying to reach their mom on their cell phone. A teacher shared photos of the bullet holes in their windows — bullet holes now concealed by boards masking all signs of the destruction and human loss. And, a first responder unable to speak to me about all that he saw simply said, ‘This is the worst I’ve ever seen in my career as a firefighter.’”

“Many in this ridiculous debate continue to argue that an AR-15 is no different than owning a semi-automatic pistol,” Gronik remarked. “Not true. Military rifles like these are the weapons of choice in wars because they are both deadly and deadly accurate. They are designed to kill the enemy fast and efficiently. There is no place in Wisconsin, or in our country, for weaponry designed to kill people fast and efficiently in schools, at concerts or nightclubs. When I’m governor, I’ll drive change. I’ll take on the NRA and any other comers. I’m here to inspire real change and deliver an optimistic future for our state after seven disastrous years of Governor Walker.”

“Governor Walker’s answer to yet another school shooting is to propose funding that completely misses the point. His ‘BS response’ should come as no surprise since he’s already accepted \$3.5 million from the NRA. He is not governing on behalf of the people at this point. Instead, he’s watching the backside of the NRA,” said Gronik. “Gov. Walker’s big answer to yet another school tragedy is to fortify our schools like you would a prison. It is exactly the kind of idea that what one of the Stoneman Douglass students told me she doesn’t want. She said, ‘My school feels like a prison now. I don’t want to go back. I can’t wait to get out of here but where am I going to go? I’m afraid.’”

A math teacher present during the shooting spoke about the resolve of her amazing students. She said, “I’ve been teaching these kids for 16 years. They’re not going away. They will keep pushing this until they get what they want. It’s what we teach at our school.” Gronik added, “She also made me aware of yet another injustice stemming from this life-altering crisis.” The teacher shared, “We teachers are being told that we only have ten co-pay visits to receive the counseling needed to help us cope with this ordeal and then we’re on our own. Ten visits!” Gronik said, “The anguish on her face was clear and palpable. How can this be the best we can do for the teachers who hid kids in closets, experienced the unimaginable and put their own lives at risk? This is not right!”

“While we knew each other only briefly, in this short time I experienced what the country is seeing first-hand. These students are remarkable and wise beyond their years. They’re articulate and passionate, and it’s clear they are not going to sit down until they have successfully pressed to create real change in our gun laws. They’re calling out politicians for their inaction and making it clear that pacifying words are just a bunch of BS. No more kids and teachers are going to die at the hands of a disturbed individual armed with a killing machine on their watch.”

“We all spontaneously hugged at the gate, and while doing so, one of the teachers said, ‘They need a lot of hugs — a lot of hugs.’”

“When I’m governor we will honor these students and all who have died needless deaths from gun violence by enacting desperately needed real gun reforms. And, we’ll do so while respecting the culture of hunting in our state. What I can’t respect is doing nothing like Gov Walker.” Gronik said. “I’m going after the NRA. They won’t have a death grip on Wisconsin on my watch. Gov Walker’s time is up.”