



UVALDE SCHOOL SHOOTING

'WE ALL HURT'



After Tuesday's shooting at Uvalde's Robb Elementary School, the Uvalde Civic Center was quickly transformed into a grief counseling center for school employees and others in the town to gather and console one another. MIKALA COMPTON/AMERICAN-STATESMAN

GUN CONTROL

Abbott shrugs off calls for tougher laws

Madlin Mekelburg
Austin American-Statesman
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gov. Greg Abbott said Wednesday that Texas does not need to adopt tougher gun laws in the wake of Tuesday's mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, where 19 students and two teachers were killed.

He said adding gun restrictions is "not a real solution" to ending mass shootings and that calls to do so oversimplify the issue. Instead, Abbott said state leaders should focus on

See GUN CONTROL, Page 6A

Residents confront grief and loss as more details emerge about attack

Tony Plohetski Austin American-Statesman | USA TODAY NETWORK

UVALDE — The horrific scope of a school shooting that killed 19 elementary students and two teachers came into agonizing focus Wednesday as officials provided new details about the attack, including that the gunman barricaded himself in a fourth grade classroom where most victims died.

As officials work to piece together what happened, grieving residents tried to comprehend the unimaginable loss and to console friends and neighbors. In Uvalde, a South Texas city of 16,000 residents, nearly everyone knew a family touched by the bloodshed — either directly or indirectly.

"To say the least, Uvalde has been shaken to its core," said Gov. Greg Abbott, who choked back tears in a news conference at Uvalde High School. "Families are

See GRIEF, Page 8A

MORE INSIDE

- **PolitiFact:** Shooter was US citizen. **2A**
- **Editorial:** How many more children must die? **Opinion, 11A**
- **Photos:** Rally seeks action after shooting. **Metro & State, 1B**
- **How to talk to kids about this.** **7A**
- **Austin-area schools boost law enforcement presence.** **2A**
- **Will Congress now act on guns as shootings loom over debate?** **4A**

'MY ONE AND ONLY BABY'

A look at some of the victims slain in Uvalde

Austin American-Statesman
USA TODAY NETWORK

On Wednesday, the names of some of the people killed in a mass shooting the day before at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde began to emerge.

Authorities said a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers at the school, the state's deadliest shooting in modern history and the country's third mass shooting within weeks.

An 18-year-old man, armed with a rifle, shot his grandmother before driving to Robb Elementary and

See VICTIMS, Page 4A

Why Clean Out Your Gutters?



The Leaf-Free Gutter Solution That Really Works!

Eliminate the expense, effort, and danger of cleaning your gutters. Beautiful enough for the most gracious home. With a no-nonsense guarantee: **if it ever clogs, we clean it!**

- Patented double water-flow capacity.
- The strongest, best-engineered solution available!

Free Estimates
346-646-6398

SAVE \$400 NOW!

Expires 5/31/2022

US Supreme Court takes a hit
The high court's approval drops after abortion opinion leak. **2A**

Looking to cool off?
Your guide to pools and swimming holes this summer. **Inside, Austin360**

Weather
High 91° | Low 65°
Sunny. Forecast, **12B**

Volume 151 | No. 291
To subscribe 512-445-4040
©2022 **\$2.50**



AX-29901420

Grief

Continued from Page 1A

broken apart. Hearts are forever shattered, and all Texans are grieving with the people of Uvalde.”

Abbott said that 17 other people were wounded, and that the parents of each victim had been informed of their deaths. Family members on social media identified some of the students and the two teachers.

The confirmed deaths include fourth grade teachers Eva Mireles, 44, and Irma Garcia. Also confirmed are students Uziah Garcia, 8; Xavier Javier Lopez, 10; Eliahana Cruz Torres; Jose Flores, 10; and Jailah Silguero, 10.

Abbott said authorities had identified no prior warning that the man planned to go on a shooting spree. He also had no documented mental health or adult criminal history, although he said it is possible that he might have had a juvenile criminal record.

According to investigators, a week before the attack, the 18-year-old gunman legally bought two AR-15 rifles from a licensed dealer — one on May 17 and the other May 20. In between, he purchased nearly 400 rounds of ammunition, investigators said in a briefing with state officials, including state Sen. John Whitmire, D-Houston, who provided those details to the American-Statesman.

Abbott, who focused on issues surrounding mental health while saying little about the state’s liberal gun laws, said the ability for a man so young to buy a gun has been Texas law for 60 years. His comments sparked an extraordinary scene when Democratic gubernatorial hopeful Beto O’Rourke rushed the stage demanding reform to the state’s gun laws and telling Abbott: “This is on you.”

Facebook posts

Abbott on Wednesday offered new details about the shooting and said the gunman posted to Facebook three times in the 30 minutes prior to entering Robb Elementary, detailing his plans and posting updates about his planned attack.

Abbott said the shooter shared on Facebook that he planned to shoot his grandmother, and then provided a later update confirming that he had shot her. He shares the same address as his grandmother. The grandmother called 911.

Then the gunman wrote that he planned to shoot up an elementary school.

Abbott said Wednesday that the remarks were posted publicly to Facebook, but a spokesman with the social media website’s parent company Meta disputed that characterization of the posts.

“The messages Gov. Abbott described were private one-to-one text messages that were discovered after the terrible tragedy occurred,” Meta spokesman Andy Stone said in a statement. “We are closely cooperating with law enforcement in their ongoing investigation.”

After shooting his grandmother, Abbott said Ramos fled in his truck and crashed near the school. Police officers for the school district engaged with Ramos at that time, but he was able to enter the school through a back door. He then entered a classroom and began firing at the children inside with an AR-15 rifle, the only weapon he used in the attack.

Most of the deaths happened in that classroom, Texas Department of Public Safety spokesman Travis Considine said.

Other officers arrived and worked to

evacuate other students and teachers, Considine said. At that point, a tactical Border Patrol officer arrived, learned where the gunman was and shot and killed him.

Investigators were still searching Wednesday for a motive.

‘Too much for any heart to bear’

By Wednesday morning, the town had all the signs of a community locked in tragedy. Hours before the names of the victims began trickling out on social media, word began to spread throughout the town.

In an effort to console the grieving, the local mortuary, Hillcrest Memorial Funeral Home, announced on Facebook that it would offer services at no cost.

The civic center — the polling place for Tuesday’s runoff election — was quickly transformed into a grief counseling center for school employees and people in the town to gather and console one another. Residents could be seen hugging and crying outside while the town’s fire marshal helped shield them from spectators and the media.

Rebecca Funk came to the center to try to find the teachers who helped save her son’s life. On Tuesday, she was at work at H-E-B when her sister-in-law called to alert her to the shooting. She said she became physically ill and that “I could not even hear a police car or ambulance without thinking, ‘Is that my son?’”

She was later reunited at the civic center with her son, William, a 10-year-old fourth grader at Robb Elementary. He got out of the school unharmed.

“I just pray that they will be able to find some peace at some point,” she said of the parents whose children were killed.

Marina Lena Garcia, who moved to Uvalde from Houston in 1989, was at the H-E-B when she heard about a possible shooting at the school. Unable to believe the news, she drove about a half-mile and saw the aftermath of the bloodshed.

“There is nothing that can be said in my opinion to comfort the people of Uvalde,” she said. “I always say the children of Uvalde belong to everybody. And when one child gets hurt, everybody hurts. We all hurt.”

Tracey Coberdale, who has lived in Uvalde for three years to be closer to her brother, stood outside a Walgreens on East Main Street by her SUV. She had just gone inside to buy a marker to write “Uvalde Strong” on her rear windshield.

“I have children and grandchildren, and I can’t imagine the pain these people are going through,” she said. “We know some people. ... It is babies. And it’s teachers.”

“We can recover from this,” she said. “We are a small community, but we are a strong community.”

At the scene of the shooting, mourners brought flowers to place on the campus, which school officials closed, canceling the remaining classes for the school year. One woman brought 19 balloons in the shape of silver stars and gave them to several state troopers, asking them to place them at the crime scene.

Others traveled from other parts of the state to do what they could to try to support the community.

They included Jena Bissaillon of Houston, who arrived after driving nearly five hours early Wednesday.

“I felt called in the middle of the night by God to come here, to help however I can to comfort people,” she said. “I don’t have any words. It is just too much — too much for any heart to bear. Only God can get us through this.”

Staff writer Madlin Mekelburg contributed to this report.

CONGRATULATE A GRADUATE!

2022
Announcing the Graduation of **JANE WHITE**
Jane White earned a bachelor of science degree in psychology from State University. Congratulations!

ONLY \$2000

Sunday, June 26th, 2022
Hurry! Deadline is Monday, June 20th

Please call 888-228-2468 opt. 7, or email AustinAmericanClass@gannett.com to place your ad today!
When submitting your email request, please include your address and phone number.

Happy Father's Day

Happy Father's Day

If there was a day for everything you have given to me as a father, it would be Father's Day every day. Thanks for always helping me to remember what is important in life... and today it is you! You're the best!

ONLY \$1500

SUNDAY 6.19.22

Hurry!
Deadline is Monday, June 13th

Please call 866-228-2468, Opt. 7 or email AustinAmericanClass@Gannett.com to place your ad today!

When submitting your email request, please include your address and phone number.

Miracle Method SURFACE REFINISHING

KITCHEN Resurfacing SWEEPSTAKES

Before

You could WIN a \$1,000 Kitchen Countertop Resurface!

ENTER TODAY
Statesman.com/contests

No Purchase Necessary. Must be 18+ to enter. For official rules visit contest webpage.