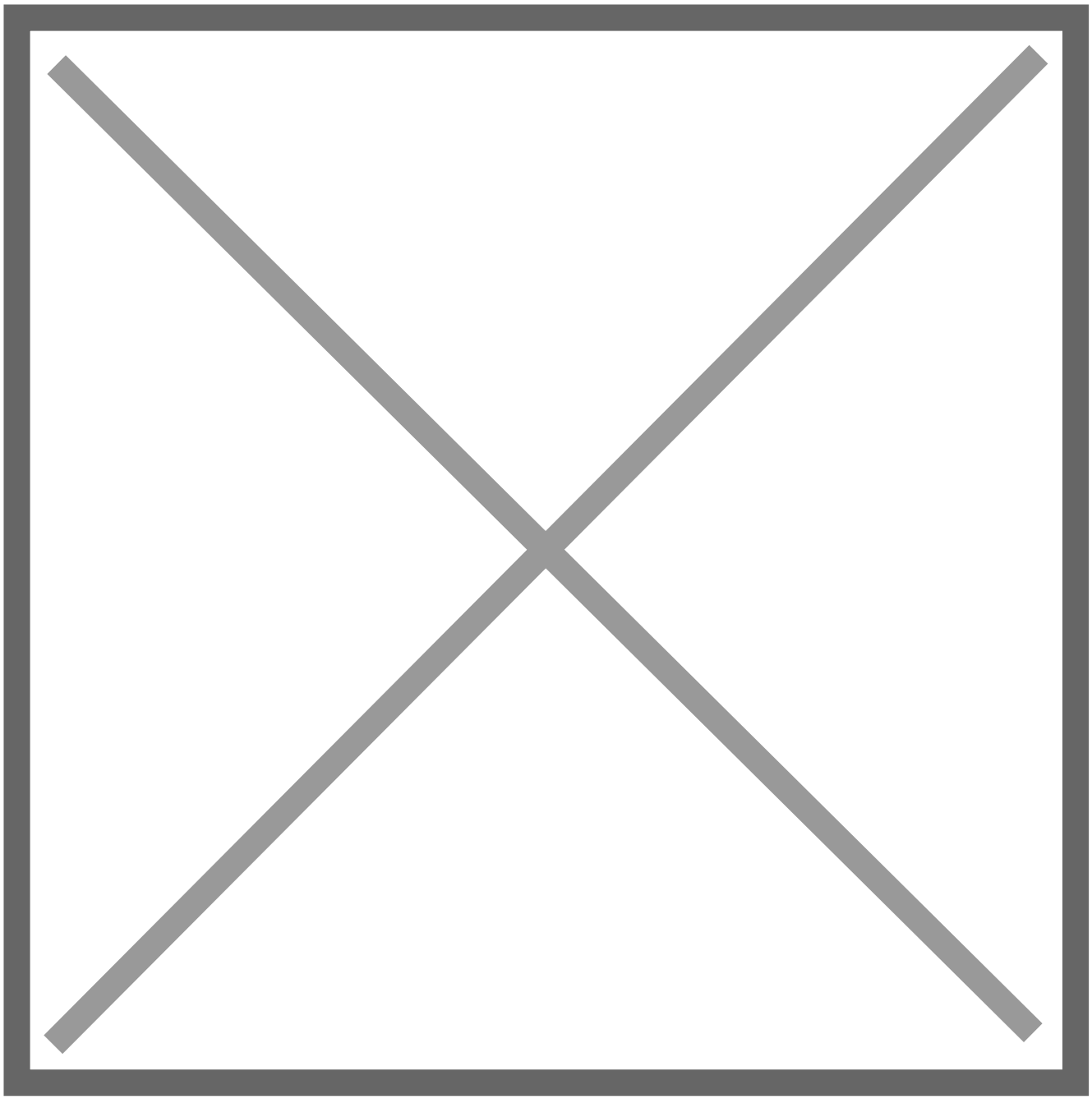
News



A salesman is pictured in a file photo clearing the chamber of an AR-15 at a gun store in Provo, Utah. On Sept. 27, 2025, Tess Rada and other Annunciation parents and volunteers from Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action gathered on the steps of the Minnesota Capitol in St. Paul to demand a special legislative session be called by Gov. Tim Walz to ban semi-automatic rifles. (OSV News/Reuters/George Frey)

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Minneapolis — October 21, 2025
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Matthew Tews said he drove with alarm from his downtown Minneapolis office across town to Annunciation Catholic Church and School Aug. 27.

A friend of Tews, who was at the Minneapolis school, told him that they only found one of his two children in the school gym.

A shooting at their children's school was a thought that kept his wife, Melissa, up at night, Tews said. That nightmare became a reality when a shooter fired more than 100 rounds through the stained-glass windows at Annunciation Church while their children, a first and a fourth grader, attended an all-school Mass.

Two students were killed in the gunfire; more than a dozen were injured. Police said the shooter died of a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Both of the Tews' children were found safe, but sleep doesn't come easily for any of the family members. Nor does it come easily for Tess Rada's daughter, Lila, 8, who was near pews that were hit by bullets.

But the reality of school shootings, Tews said, didn't feel so distant, even before that August morning.

"You pray that it's never going to happen," Tews said. "The beauty and the curse of living in a really, really big country that is so connected now with social media and news media and everything is (that) when you start looking for it, it does happen so

often. … You can become numb to it — but it didn't feel like it could never happen. And now it did."

Tews said that day feels like a lifetime ago — and like no time has passed at all.

"It's still very, very, very fresh and (we'll) probably live (with it) for a long time," Tews told The Catholic Spirit, the news outlet of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Since Aug. 27, Tews said, he has attended meetings with other Annunciation families to discuss what can be done to prevent shootings like what they experienced from happening again. Rada is also in this group of parents. Currently, Rada said, the group is considering all avenues for promoting change. Rada and Tews said this work has become an important part of their lives.

On Sept. 27, Rada and other Annunciation parents and volunteers from Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action gathered on the steps of the Minnesota Capitol in St. Paul to demand a special legislative session be called by Gov. Tim Walz to ban semi-automatic rifles.

"It's easy to think that there's nothing we can do, but we can," Tews said. "There are things we can do to make things better for us. That's what Americans do, is we come together to make things better."

Annunciation families demanding change include Malia Kimbrell, who during a news conference Sept. 14 at Hennepin Healthcare in Minneapolis urged local lawmakers to fund mental health support, improve measures on background checks and place an immediate ban on semi-automatic rifles and high-capacity magazines. Kimbrell's daughter, Vivian St. Clair, was among the children wounded in the Aug. 27 shooting.

"I will get the names of any lawmakers who stand in the way of that happening," Kimbrell said. "I will invite you to come to my living room, and insist that you hold Vivian's hand while we do her dressing changes each night and she cries the entire time. You can look her in the eye while you cleanse her bullet wounds."

In a perfect world, Tews said, shootings like this would never happen.

"We've shown in America time and time again that we're unlikely to reach that goal," Tews said. "So, my personal goal is to make it way less likely that they (mass shootings) happen, and if they do, that we mitigate damage as much as possible."

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Tews believes there are many issues to address in the wake of the shooting, but his main concern is banning AR-style rifles and high-capacity magazines. He also believes buy-back programs should be implemented. Rada agreed, and said boundaries should be put in place to limit sales of high-capacity magazines and binary triggers, which increase the rate of fire on a semi-automatic firearm.

Aside from firearm-specific legislation, Rada said there are other means to prevent tragedies such as what happened at Annunciation.

"Things like having better checks and balances in place for people buying these weapons," Rada said. "It's truly so many different things," she said. "One gun law is not going to do anything. One mental health law is not going to do anything. It needs to be many, many different things. And hopefully that's something that we can all come to some sort of compromise about."

A middle ground might be banning weapons capable of rapidly firing many rounds, Tews and Rada said.

Tews said he comes from a family of hunters and he supports the Second Amendment, which protects the right to keep and bear arms. People should be able to own hunting rifles and should be able conceal carry handguns, he said. Rada said that even before the shooting she was against guns in any capacity.

The sticking point, both said, is the Second Amendment.

"If you look at countries like Australia or Scotland that have had mass shootings and then they completely changed their laws and now they're totally eradicated, that's wonderful, but they don't have that Second Amendment that we have, so it was a lot easier for them to do that," Rada said.

"I do realize that even though I am not a fan of guns in any capacity, it is going to be very, very hard to get around that Second Amendment," she continued. "Looking at it realistically, there's no reason for anybody to have an AR (automatic rifle) style weapon. There's no reason for somebody to be able to shoot 116 rounds in two minutes. If you're hunting, you don't need to do that. You would totally eviscerate the animal."

Rada said she sent an email to each state senator in Minnesota and received a wide variety of responses. She feels that gun reform is stuck in gridlock.

"I'm optimistic in the long term, not necessarily in the short term," Rada said. "Getting bills passed takes so much time. It's not going to be a quick fix. Nothing is probably going to happen very fast. But something I've heard from every parent is that we are in this for the long haul and we're going to see it through to its conclusion, even if it takes our whole lives. What happened is not something that we're going to forget. It's imprinted on us forever. I feel like this is the fight of my life."

Meanwhile, Tews said he is proud to be part of the Annunciation community. "I was before, and I'm more so now," he said. "All of the amazing things that the whole community has done for each other after this. There's always a light, and that has been the light."

This story appears in the **Minneapolis church shooting** feature series. View the full series.