

Youth Safety Summit



Report
of the
People

October 1998

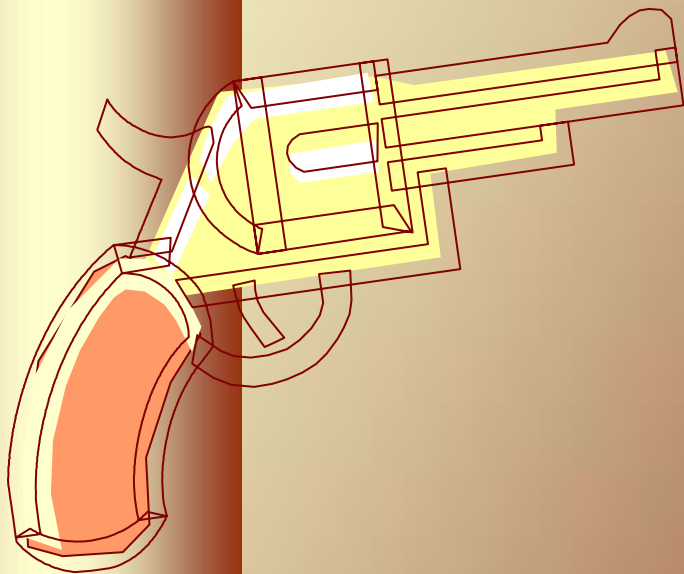


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Introduction

There is no question that youth violence is an issue that needs to be addressed. In a very short period of time, the news media has covered school shootings in Springfield, Oregon; Edinboro, Pennsylvania; Jonesboro, Arkansas; West Paducah, Kentucky; and Pearl, Mississippi. There have been many other instances that have not made the nation-wide news - incidents involving knives, threats and other forms of violence. A new report out, from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in Washington State, while showing an overall decrease in the number of weapons-related incidents since the 1993-94 school year, shows an overall increase in the number of weapons-related incidents in the last school year (1996-97). The report also shows that a far greater number of incidents involved knives or daggers at school (1411 incidents) and other types of violence (748 incidents) than involved guns (143 incidents). Not only would it be irresponsible to say this is an issue that does not need to be addressed, but just as irresponsible to only recognize guns as the source or focus of the violence.

In May 1998, Washington Governor Gary Locke and Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson issued a press release announcing the appointment of

a working group of citizens from across the state that would set the stage for a youth safety summit later this summer.

This press release started a chain of events culminating in the August 19, 1998, Youth Safety Summit and the ensuing report by the Governor and OSPI in October 1998.

This document, written by the people of Washington state, is a journey through the chain of events leading up to the Youth Safety Summit, and how those events, although portrayed as citizen oriented and citizen based, were neither, but were manipulated to give the impression of citizen involvement and citizen input. In so doing, we shall weave the untold story from state documents.

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Introduction

A report has been issued by Governor Locke and SPI Bergeson relative to the Youth Safety Summit. Trying to link directly to the web page (<http://www.wa.gov/governor/taskcomm/youth/youthtoc.htm>) of the report, however, produces an error message. The web addresses below will take you to the two sites from which you can access the report. Of major importance are the recommendations.

Office of the Supt of Public Instruction (<http://www.ospi.wednet.edu>)
Governor's Office, Washington State (<http://www.wa.gov/governor/>)

Hitler, himself, couldn't have put together a better plan to set in place the infrastructure by which to control a population.

– Roxanne Sitler, Education Researcher

* * * * *

Witnesses testifying before Congressional committees on the merits or demerits of proposed legislation should be routinely asked whether they have personally received government money in the past and whether they stand to receive any in the future as a result of the bills they are testifying about. If nothing else, this would shatter the illusion that what they are saying is disinterested 'expertise' being offered 'in the public interest.'

– *Random Thoughts Against The Tide*; Thomas Sowell;
1994

Letter to the Legislators

Nine Mile Falls, WA 99026
November 3, 1998

To the Honorable Legislators of the State of Washington,

On August 19, 1998, a Youth Safety Summit was held in Tukwila, Washington. Since that time, a report has been forthcoming from the Office of the Governor and Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction which makes 50 recommendations for addressing the problem of youth violence.

This report claims that the process resulting in the recommendations had the input of the citizens of Washington state. As outlined in the enclosed report of the people on the Youth Safety Summit, this can only be claimed if "citizens" is redefined as "publicly paid employees and special interest groups." The people of Washington state — the Moms and Dads, taxpayers, citizens, blue-collar and white-collar workers, voters — have not yet been heard on the issue of youth violence. As shown in the enclosed report, the process used at the community forums, indeed at the Youth Safety Summit itself, is a process that is very narrowly structured and very strictured to control the outcome, to give the illusion of public participation and public input.

We, the people of Washington state, submit this report to the Legislature of the State of Washington. It is the position of the people, that the outcomes of the Summit fail to represent the unfettered input of the people of the State of Washington; that the outcomes are intended to further entrench the power and position of state agencies in transforming their function from serving the people to controlling the people. We, the people of Washington state, request that this situation be remedied by disregarding the recommendations of the Office of the Governor and the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, inclusive of any legislation proposed as a result of the Summit; that the Office of the Governor and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction be held accountable for failing to meet the intent of public input; and that the Legislature hold publicized hearings where people are allowed to give their unfettered input on the issue.

Thank you for your time,

Sincerely,

Lynn M Stuter

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EVENT NUMBER ONE

On May 27, 1998, Washington Governor Gary Locke and Superintendent of Public Instruction Terry Bergeson issued a press release in response to the Springfield, Oregon, shooting, announcing the appointment of...

*a group that will take a broad look at the issue of youth violence, not only in schools but also in our communities.*¹

This group became the Citizens Advisory Group (CAG). In the press release, Governor Locke states,

*The working group will tap the knowledge and experiences of the best minds in Washington, conduct public hearings around the state, and make recommendations we can weigh carefully during a summit*²

*...Locke said he wants to appoint a working committee of parents, students, school administrators, teachers, law enforcement officers, health and human services professionals, juvenile authorities, business and labor representatives, local elected officials, legislators and other to put together solutions to this complex problem.*³

Subsequently, a public disclosure request was made of the governor's office, in part requesting disclosure of "the procedure used to select commission members."⁴ In a letter of response, dated July 27, 1998, signed by Leslie Frank of the Governor's office, she states,

After the Governor and Superintendent announced their plans to hold the summit, numerous citizens contacted their offices with offers to help. They were considered for appointment, along with numerous others whose names were suggested by staff and other individuals and organizations. Members of the Governor and Superintendent's staff's made recommendations to the Governor and Superintendent, who made the appointments.

On August 1, 1998, a public disclosure request was made of Bretta Beveridge of the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, relative to a form sent out bearing her name, e-mail address, and fax number, soliciting information on the individuals appointed to the CAG. In that request, Ms Beveridge was asked to disclose "who provided the list of who this form was sent to." In a letter, dated August 24, 1998, signed by Ms Beveridge, she states,

After the Governor and Superintendent of Public Instruction announced their plans to hold the Youth Safety Summit, numerous citizens contacted their offices with offers of help. They were considered for appointment along with others whose names were

¹ Press Release, Governor's Office, May 27, 1998.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid

⁴ Request of Lynn Stuter, dated July 1, 1998, sent email to Governor Gary Locke.

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suggested by staff and other individuals and organizations. Members of the Governor and Superintendent's staffs made recommendations to the Governor and Superintendent, who ultimately made the final decisions regarding the final advisory group list.

In comparing the statement of Ms Frank and Ms Beveridge, it becomes obvious that the two statements are identical. But the question remained – by what vehicle were the citizens who contacted the Governor and OSPI's offices with offers of help, made aware that the Governor and OSPI were, indeed, seeking "offers of help." This question was e-mailed to Ms Beveridge on September 5, 1998. In an e-mail dated October 22, 1998, Bill Mason of OSPI, states,

On May 27, 1998, a press release was issued regarding the Press Conference conducted in Seattle that same day where Governor Locke and Superintendent Bergeson discussed plans to study the multi-faceted issue of Youth Violence and conduct a youth safety summit later in the summer. As you are aware, that summit took place on August the 19th. Contact numbers for the Governor's Office and OSPI were provided at the end of the press release. Based on this press release and the heightened concern about school safety due to the tragedies that occurred nationally, citizens contacted the Governor's Office and OSPI to offer their expertise and share their personal experience regarding exposure to violence and concerns about safety in our school and communities.

Mr Mason indicates that people became aware that the Governor and OSPI were seeking offers of help from this press release and were able to contact the Governor's Office and OSPI via the contact numbers on the press release. An on-line internet search of four newspapers in the State of Washington – the Spokesman Review, Bremerton Sun, News Tribune and Seattle Times only turned up one of the four that printed anything on this press release. In the article, published in the Spokesman Review on May 28, 1998, no indication is given that the Governor and OSPI are "seeking help;" quite the contrary, it is indicated that they intend to *appoint* a working group; and the article gives no contact phone numbers for the Governor's office or OSPI.

Comments made on the vitas⁵ submitted to Bretta Beveridge, via the form sent out by her office, give indication that individuals were contacted by individuals within the Governor's Office and OSPI, as follows:

I took this information over the phone. ... Denise Lewis has been senior program director ... Margie Reeves will be e-mailing me a bio over the weekend.⁶

Bio of Margie Reeves, who will serve on advisory group.⁷

There was an article in our paper this morning regarding the task force and the people from Spokane who are on the committee. Why am I an "add on" to this

⁵ A "vita" is a resumé.

⁶ From Dick Van Wagenen of OFM to Bretta Beveridge of OSPI in an e-mail referencing information on the two prospective CAG members noted.

⁷ Ibid.

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*process? Is there a reason as to why I was contacted so late?*⁸ (When forwarding the above e-mail to Beveridge, Mason comments "One more down.")

*Re: telephone conversation today's date ... Message: Short vita attached; address is as shown*⁹ *above. I enjoyed our conversation and I am willing to help.*¹⁰

As nearly as can be ascertained, from the conflicting information provided, the following is the breakout of those chosen to participate on the citizens advisory group:

Business	8	12.7%	(6 of the 8 businesses were media)
Other/Special Interests	20	31.7%	
Parents	2	3.2%	(One parent is a former DSHS employee, the other parent did not provide a vita)
Public Employees	26	41.3%	
Youth	7	11.1%	

Public employees make up the biggest percentage; parents make up the smallest percentage, with special interest groups running second to public employees. This also suggests that the greater number of individuals appointed were contacted, not that they contacted OSPI or the Governor's office. While the Governor's office and SPI have consistently claimed that the individuals appointed to the CAG volunteered their services, this is simply not true.

⁸ E-mail from Dave Petty of Spokane School District #81 to Bill Mason of OSPI.

⁹ As written.

¹⁰ From a fax cover sheet sent to OSPI by Dr Dorothy Mann on June 22, 1998.

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EVENT NUMBER TWO

On June 5, 1998, the following memo, printed on state letterhead and bearing the signatures of both Governor Gary Locke and OSPI Bergeson was sent out:

*Dear Educational Service District Superintendents
County Community Mobilization Coordinators
Community Health and Safety Network Chairs*

In response to ever-increasing concern among Washington citizens regarding youth violence, we are hosting a statewide Youth Safety Summit tentatively scheduled for August 19, 1998. This summit will involve nationally recognized experts on youth violence, state and local leaders, community representatives, and youth. The desired outcome of the summit will be concrete statewide and local level policy and program recommendations regarding youth violence and school safety.

The summit is being organized by an advisory committee of community leaders from throughout the state. Staff members from our offices are supporting the efforts of this committee.

Local involvement will be the foundation of the summit—a successful outcome is not possible without it. To that end, we are inviting representatives from local school districts and educational service districts (ESDs), county Community Mobilization programs, and Public Health and Safety Networks to jointly convene local forums. The local forms are intended to generate community-based information that the Youth Safety Summit Advisory Committee will rely on to chart the direction of the summit. A community forum orientation will be held on Friday, June 12, 1998, from 10 a.m.-12 noon for those people convening forums at the local level. This will be conducted via the K-20 Network and will be hosted by each of the nine ESDs.

This is a very important issue to all of our citizens; we urge you to attend this orientation so the community forums have the greatest opportunity for success.

We are extremely grateful for your willingness to take the lead in these important local meetings.

This meeting, on June 12, 1998, was to train the facilitators in how to facilitate (how to use the consensus building process) the upcoming community forums held around the state in June and July, 1998. On July 29, 1998, an e-mail was sent to Martin Mueller, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, OSPI, requesting disclosure of *"the complete packet of information used at the community forum orientation meetings held on Friday, June 12, 1998."*¹¹ An e-mail¹² to Martin Mueller, querying the role of the Safe and Drug Free Schools in the Youth Safety Summit and public forums, was responded to by Mr Mueller as follows,

¹¹ Request of Lynn Stuter, dated July 29, 1998, to Martin Mueller.

¹² Email of Lynn Stuter to Martin Mueller, dated August 2, 1998.

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Safe and Drug Free Schools unit personnel ... have no direct involvement in local forums other than to produce the resource materials you have requested (the June 12 orientation packet)...

The Safe and Drug-Free Schools program is funded via federal dollars. Were the packets of information, sent out to the ESDs, sent to the state from the federal government?

The first document, in the packet sent to the ESDs, is a memo from Thomas J. Kelly, Assistant Superintendent, Operations and Support, OSPI, and addressed, as above, to ESD Superintendents, Community Mobilization Coordinators, and Community Health and Safety Network Chairs. In part, the memo states,

At the videoconference you will receive an orientation to the proposed Youth Safety Summit, implementation an update on the planning, and a packet of suggested materials for implementing a community forum on youth safety. This packet will include:

- 1. Sample press release to announce local community forum.*
- 2. Advertising poster/flyers that allow you to fill in your own pertinent information.*
- 3. Suggested community forum agenda.*
- 4. Facilitation suggestions.*
- 5. A participant survey.*
- 6. A format for presenting information generated by the forum to the Youth Safety Summit Advisory Committee.*
- 7. Maps to all ESDs.*
- 8. Community Mobilization, Community Health and Safety Network, and ESD contact lists including addresses.*
- 9. Other pertinent information.*

It becomes very obvious, in perusing the packet of information, that the community forums were to be very much structured and stricured around state (or federal) provided information. A "fact sheet" enclosed provides the structure of the forums, instructing that the forums were to "Produce uniformly formatted input around 6 pillars (content areas)," indicating further on that the "'uniformly formatted input' (outcome of the local forum)" is "key" to the process; that "Support materials for hosting the forums will be supplied." The sheet also instructs who should be invited, noting first community leaders ("Government – City and County, Public Health, County Prevention, Law/Justice/Security, Social Services, Faith Community"), then citizens ("Parents, Youth"), then others. A sheet entitled *Strategies for a Successful Community Youth Safety Forum* instructs "makes specific invitations to youth" and ...

If you invite citizen comment, be prepared to limit the length of time allowed for each speaker, so that as many individuals as possible can be heard within a limited time frame. Appointing a timekeeper may be helpful.

If the purpose is to attain community input, public input, why is it necessary to limit the time in which those citizens can give input?

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Also enclosed are several pages from a consensus building guide; instructing the facilitators how to structure the meetings to achieve *decision making by group consensus*, defining the same as...

*a collective opinion arrived at by a group of individuals working together under conditions that permit communications to be sufficiently open and the group climate to be sufficiently supportive for everyone in the group to feel that he/she has had a fair chance to influence the decision. When a decision is made by consensus, all members understand the decision and agree to support it.*¹³ (highlighting added)

Note that the communications are *sufficiently open* and group climate *sufficiently supportive* but neither are *totally open* or *totally supportive*. Note also that the individual is to *feel* (as opposed to *know*) that he or she had a chance to influence the decision. The intent is to make the individual *believe* (again, as opposed to *know*) that he or she actually had influence and input to the decision. The pages provided describe a consensus process that is used very effectively to move an unsuspecting group to a preset conclusion and garner group support for the same.¹⁴ As one individual, caught up in this process has put it, *"She knows just how to facilitate so that everyone thinks it is their idea"*¹⁵ The material provided by OSPI, the narrowly defined pillars that were to be the content and focus of the forums, the structure of the forums, the consensus process used, was intended to do just that. **While the claim has been consistently made that there was "community input," that input was not unfettered, it was facilitated to control the outcome.** This precludes the open and honest debate of the issues that produces truly innovative and creative solutions. As Jim Keeffe of Issaquah, stated,

A true public hearing is one where ALL comments, concerns, suggestions and demands expressed by those in attendance are recorded verbatim and passed as a complete record to officials who are accountable to the public.

According to the press release of Governor Locke and SPI Bergeson, *"public hearings"* were to be held around the state to address, among other things, *"the root causes of youth violence."*¹⁶ Yet that is not what happened.

¹³ *The Fantastic Facilitator: Engaging Activities for Leading Groups*, published by the National Dropout Prevention Center, Clemson University; page 85.

¹⁴ Those who have researched the consensus building process, know that the outcomes are predetermined, and that it is the job of the facilitator to move the greater number of people to believe that they had input to the predetermined outcome.

¹⁵ Resource document, *Final Report to the Legislature, Schools for the Twenty First Century*; 1995; page 597.

¹⁶ Press Release; Governor's Office, May 27, 1998.

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EVENT NUMBER THREE

On the website of OSPI¹⁷, was to be found the schedule of the meetings held around the state; 56 in all were listed¹⁸. Concerning the meetings listed, the following should be noted:

1. Meetings were very poorly advertised, if at all. With a few exceptions, the meetings were not published in papers of general circulation with enough visibility to be seen by the public at large unless they read the paper from cover to cover. Nor were they published far enough in advance of the meetings to give the public an opportunity to plan to attend. People who called OSPI and the Governor's office, inquiring about times and places of meetings, were told by OSPI and the Governor's office that they didn't know.
2. For several of the King county¹⁹, and all of the Kittitas county meetings, anyone choosing to participate had to call the contact person, if they knew who that was or that there was one, to find out where and when meetings would be held, or search the local daily paper, if there was one, in hopes the meeting time and place would be published.
3. Some meetings were held as part of other meetings and may not have been public.²⁰
4. OSPI did not know of some of the local forums until after they were held.²¹
5. ALL meetings were scheduled on week days. The following is the break down of the times scheduled for the meetings:

Meetings convened before 7 p.m.	40	71.4%	²² not conducive to public participation
Meetings convened 7 p.m. and after	12	21.4%	conducive to public participation
Meetings convened at various times	4	7.1%	convenience unknown
6. One meeting was held in a home – that of Kent Police Chief, Edward Crawford, from 11 am to 3:30 p.m.
7. One meeting was listed as being held May 29, 1998, in Coupeville before the meeting schedule was released. At least nine of the meetings were held on or after July 20, with the reports due at the OSPI on July 24, 1998. This made it very difficult (outside facsimile) for the reports to reach Olympia on time. One King county meeting was scheduled for July 27th, with the report from that meeting due on July 24th.

¹⁷ OSPI Website (<http://inform.ospi.wednet.edu/safety/sched.html>)

¹⁸ This was as of August 15, 1998. On July 25, 1998, there were only 51 meetings listed. This schedule has been altered since the meetings actually occurred, after the fact.

¹⁹ Several of the King County meetings appeared on the OSPI website schedule after the meetings occurred.

²⁰ According to a FAX sent to Cris Shardelman by Bill Mason of OSPI, dated July 28, 1998.

²¹ Ibid.

²² It is very difficult for an individual, leaving work at 5 p.m., to travel home, prepare a meal, eat, and be at a meeting by 7 p.m., especially in larger populated areas where meetings could be several miles away. The breakdown of these 40 meetings is as follows:

Meetings convened before 12 noon	14	25.0%
Meetings convened between 12 noon and 5 p.m.	10	17.6%
Meetings convened between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.	16	28.6%

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Beyond this, meetings held in Adams county and Kitsap county were not listed on the OSPI website at all as of July 25, 1998²³. According to information issued by the Legislature, a meeting was held in Adams county, at Othello, on July, 13, 1998, from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The Kitsap county meeting time (but not place) was announced in the *Bremerton Sun* on Wednesday, July 22, 1998, with the meeting held the following morning, 9 a.m. to 12 noon²⁴. A letter of invitation to this "community forum" was sent out by Frank M Deebach of Olympic ESD #114, stating, in part:

The governor has asked that each county conduct a forum to bring together local citizens who might identify the needs of each community regarding the safety and security of children. You and representatives of your agency are invited to attend the Kitsap County Youth Safety Forum.

Enclosed is an agenda and background material. Please RSVP to Lisa Haner...by...July 20, 1998. (highlighting added)

Likewise, a letter sent out by Pete Peterson of the Clallam County Juvenile and Family Services, states,

You and representatives of your agency are invited to attend the Clallam County Youth Safety Forum. The proposed date for this conference is July 22, 1998, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m. at Juvenile & Family Services, 1912 W. 18th St., Port Angeles.

Enclosed is an agenda and background material. Please RSVP to Cheryl Wilfong, (360) 417-2282 ext. 288 by Tuesday, July 21, 1998. (highlighting added)

Obviously, these RSVP invitations were sent out to publicly funded state agencies, not to the public at large. The fact that the wording of the two invitations is almost identical also suggests that this was a preprinted form sent out by the state.

Also targeted, as previously noted in the packet of materials sent out to ESDs by OSPI, were youth, with instructions given that they should be *specifically invited*.

Community members arrived at the prescribed time and place of some meetings to find a sign on the door stating that the meeting had been cancelled. Community members who attended some forums were repeatedly asked who they represented. Meeting sponsors distributed publicly funded materials at the meetings advocating the bureaucratic position on youth violence, domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, child abuse, etc.

The majority of the people participating in the meetings were public employees, paid by public tax dollars, with a vested interest in the perpetuation of a tax supported system. One meeting leader indicated that those in attendance were *"the choir."*²⁵ The manner in which

²³ These meetings appeared on the OSPI website schedule after July 25, 1998, after the meetings occurred.

²⁴ The OSPI website schedule lists this meeting as held in the "evening."

²⁵ "Youth safety forums yield suggestion," *Lewiston Morning Tribune* (<http://www.lmtribune.com/071698/northwes/174422.htm>); July 16, 1998.

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the forums were set up with the agenda preset; the multiple choice, close-ended surveys; and taxpayer funded materials passed out at the meetings, also point to the intent to perpetuate the bureaucracy rather than to find the root causes of youth violence and to address those causes.

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EVENT NUMBER FOUR

Although citizens were told that those invited to the Youth Safety Summit were "chosen from the sign-in sheets,"²⁶ the actual invitation, signed by both Governor Gary Locke and SPI Bergeson is dated July 21, 1998, three days prior to the July 24, 1998, due date for all materials to be submitted to the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Office at OSPI. Not only this, but an official at the Alternative Schools and School Security Programs stated that only six sign-in sheets had been returned. How, then, was the list of those invited actually arrived at, and when was it arrived at?

In part, the invitation sent out on July 21, 1998, states,

We are convening the Youth Safety Summit to bring together national recognized experts on youth violence and safety as well as state and local leaders, community representatives, educators, parents, and youth. The objectives of the summit are to:

- *Examine the root causes that lead to youth violence.*
- *Identify existing programs and resources within our communities.*
- *Suggest specific local, statewide, and/or national actions steps and policy/program recommendations in six areas youth involvement, violence prevention, school and community support structures, parental and family involvement, school safety and security, and media roles and responsibility.*

The summit will be the culmination of a series of community forums being held across the state where citizens have identified and shared information about youth violence prevention and voiced their individual concerns, ideas, and recommendations. With the help of a 60-member Youth Safety Citizen Advisory Group (CAG), information from these community forums will be used to shape the direction of the summit.

As a leaders whose insights can help further shape this effort, you are invited to participate in the summit on August 19. Before the summit, we will send you a draft of the CAG's recommendations. We would like you to work with the CAG to refine these suggestions at the summit in breakout discussion groups. Your participation, thoughts, opinions, and expertise are vital to our efforts. (highlighting added)

As nearly as can be ascertained from the information provided, the following is the breakout of those invited to attend the August 19, 1998, Youth Safety Summit —

Business	22	5.3%
Out of State	4	2.0%
Legislators	22	5.3%
Other/Special Interest	68	16.4%

²⁶ In an August 20, 1998, article, published in the *News Tribune*, SPI Bergeson is quoted as saying, "Many of the participants in Wednesday's summit were drawn from those meetings" indicating the community forums.

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Parents	20	4.8%
Public Employees	221	53.5%
Youth	56	13.6%

Again, the greatest percentage of individuals invited were publicly paid employees, followed by other and special interest groups, with the lowest percentage of invitees within the state being, again, parents.

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EVENT NUMBER FIVE

A June 29, 1998, press release from the Governor's office, identifying the individuals appointed the Youth Safety Citizens Advisory Group (CAG) states about this group,

*These citizens have agreed to serve as **our eyes and ears** at community forums, and to share their knowledge and experience in planning the summit ...*

*The governor and Bergeson have asked local community health and safety groups and projects to sponsor forums in communities across the state before the summit. Forum participants will identify and share information about existing youth violence prevention programs **hear individual concerns, ideas and recommendations.**²⁷ **The advisory group will use this information to chart the direction of the summit.** (highlighting added)*

From the introduction to the *Recommendations of the Citizen Advisory Group ...*

*The following summarizes the draft recommendations of the Citizen Advisory Group from its August 6 meeting. The information and ideas received from each of the 64 Community forums, held in 35 counties throughout the state, was shared with the Citizen Advisory Group. **Combining that information with its own members' experience and knowledge, the Advisory Group drafted these recommendations for consideration by the delegates to the Youth Safety Summit.** (highlighting added)*

In total, the forum reports were approximately 260 pages of outcomes from community forum meetings. Yet on August 6, 1998, **in one day**, the CAG synthesized the contents of approximately 260 pages of forum reports and 3750 surveys,²⁸ then combined that information with its own *members' experience and knowledge*, and produced *four* pages of recommendations. Is it feasible to believe that this is possible?

Beyond this, in the interests of honesty and integrity, should not the forum reports have been synthesized by a neutral group of individuals? As appointees of the Governor and OSPI, as the *"eyes and ears"*²⁹ of the Governor and OSPI, the CAG members can hardly be considered neutral or unbiased.

While individuals at the community forums were given the impression that the forums were their opportunity to give input, to be heard, to make a difference, the previous and above noted quotes state that their input was merely to **give direction** to the summit; that their input was **combined with**³⁰ the input of the CAG whose own experience and knowledge was

²⁷ As written.

²⁸ *Media Advisory* sent out by Governor's office and OSPI, dated August 12, 1998.

²⁹ Press release of Governor's Office, dated June 29, 1998.

³⁰ While "combining" might give the impression that equal or greater weight was given to the community forum input, that is an assumption, not fact.

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given greater weight, statistically³¹, than the input from the forums. In other words, the input from the forums had little to no weight at the Youth Safety Summit where the recommendations of the CAG were put on the table for consideration by summit participants. This is further stated in the *Media Advisory* issued by the Governor's office and OSPI on August 12, 1998,

In addition to the morning presentations, summit participants will discuss preliminary action steps and recommendations developed by the Citizens Advisory Group appointed by the Governor and Dr Bergeson earlier this summer. ...

The Citizens Advisory Group took into consideration ideas, concerns and recommendations shared at 65 community forums held this summer. (highlighting added)

This is not, however, what OSPI has claimed. When one individual protested the manner in which the Youth Safety Summit was being set up, she was told that the public had been involved in the process in forums all across the state; further, that the appointed citizens who received invitations represented public opinion. First, those involved in the community forums were primarily public employees. Second, it is imperative to point out that no one represents anyone unless specifically elected to do so. Representatives cannot be appointed and be said to represent the people with the exception of those appointed to fulfill a term of elective office. It is only through a secret ballot issue that representatives can be elected, can be said to represent the people, except as previously noted. The citizens invited to attend the Youth Safety Summit *do not* represent the people of this state nor the opinions of the people of this state, they represent those who *selected* them – in this case the OSPI and the Governor's office.

In final, the agenda and outcomes were preset and predetermined, the whole process was top down with the illusion (via the facilitated "public" forums) of bottom up; the process is dishonest and divisive; the process is antithetical to true public participation and input. The following, from the Youth Safety Summit agenda, speaks to the top-down strategy quite well – on August 19, 1998, at 9:25 a.m., 25 minutes after the Youth Safety Summit convened, Dr Terry Bergeson addressed the participants on the subject of "*Process, Input and Desired Outcomes.*" This pretty much says it all.

³¹ The August 12, 1998, *Media Advisory*, sent out by the Governor's office and OSPI state that "*nearly 3000 people attended the forums.*" This would, statistically, place the ratio of CAG members to forum participants at 1:50.

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EVENT NUMBER SIX

The Youth Safety Summit was held on August 19, 1998, at the Tukwila Community Center. The contract for the building, signed by Jim Erickson, OSPI, cost the taxpayers of the state \$4,000 for one day.

In the days preceding the Youth Safety Summit, several citizens called OSPI, division of Alternative Schools and School Security Programs, regarding the summit. Although these individuals were told that the meeting was a "*public meeting*," they were also told that it was by "*invitation only*;" that those not specifically invited could not participate in the meeting and would be required to stand. They were also told that the meeting would take place in a room with a 400 person capacity (according to uniform building codes)³² and that 400 invitations had been issued. Quite obviously, every effort was made to preclude public attendance and participation.

³² Exceeding the UBC rating would violate state fire codes.

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OTHER FACTS OF RELEVANCE

\$49,410 taxpayer dollars were budgeted to cover the expenses of the activities leading up to, inclusive of, and following the Youth Safety Summit. Although the *Media Advisory* sent out on August 12, 1998, to the press claims that the summit was sponsored by several organizations³³, how much those organizations donated, and who the donating organizations were,³⁴ has not been disclosed. Following is the breakdown of the preliminary budget provided by the Governor's office:³⁵

<i>Location</i>	\$3,660	<i>May be waived with food purchase</i>
<i>Food</i>	\$9,000	<i>\$30ppx300 people</i>
<i>Audio Visual</i>	\$3,000	
<i>Advisory Board Expenses</i>	\$10,500	<i>\$350ppx30people</i> ³⁶
<i>Postage materials</i>	\$5,000	<i>Invitations, pre and post event</i>
<i>Production</i>	\$2,000	<i>Copying, faxing</i>
<i>Supplies</i>	\$750	<i>Folders, paper, nametags, etc.</i>
<i>Printing</i>	\$1,000	<i>Invitations</i>
<i>Signage</i>	\$500	
<i>Meeting Planning</i>	\$10,000	
<i>Security</i>	\$1,000	
<i>Speaker Fees</i>	\$3,000	
<i>Total</i>	\$49,410	

How much was actually spent is not known.

On July 20, 1998, CNN on-line published an article in which it is stated,³⁷

President Clinton today planned to stress smaller class size and the need to restore discipline to the nation's public schools, administration officials said. They said Clinton, in an address to a teacher's convention here, also would announce a White House summit on school safety, to be held in October.

³³ The organizations noted on the August 12, 1998, *Media Advisory* are: Pearl Jam, Machinist Union (IAM 751), AT&T Wireless, McDonald's Corporation, Washington Mutual, The Boeing Company, Pemco, Seafirst Bank, The Ackerley Group and AK Media/NW. The list published in the notebook given out at the forum is even longer.

³⁴ According to the letter of Leslie Frank of the Governor's Office, dated July 27, 1998, "*With the assistance of the Association of Washington Business and the PTA Foundation, we expect that most of the costs will be paid from private donations. No final budget has yet been made.*"

³⁵ Attachment to letter of July 27, 1998, signed by Leslie Frank of the Governor's Office.

³⁶ There were actually 59 (approximate, the lists provided conflicted on the actual number) individuals on the CAG, inflating this projected cost to \$20,650.

³⁷ A newspaper clipping on the national summit, from the July 21, 1998, *Eastside Journal*, was copied and distributed at the Snoqualmie Valley community forum.

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*Administration officials said Clinton will use his speech to call for a conference in October in Washington to bring together school officials, law enforcement officers and families touched by school violence, including this year's string of deadly school shootings.*³⁸

Quite obviously, Washington citizens have not been told the whole story behind the sudden call for Youth Safety Summit meetings in Washington State. Other states are also holding similar conferences. This also lends credence to the question of where the materials sent to the ESDs by the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program at OSPI came from.

³⁸ *Clinton To Stress School Discipline* (<http://allpolitics.com/1998/07/20/clinton.teacher.quality/>); CNN; July 20, 1998.

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SUMMATION

Undoubtedly, the claim will be made, in proposals – both legislative and non-legislative – emanating from these forums, as well as the August 19 Youth Safety Summit, that said proposals have the *support of the public*. As outlined in this document, nothing could be farther from the truth.

The problem of youth violence cannot be denied, nor can it be denied that something can and must be done. However, it appears that these meetings were held, not to get to the root causes of youth violence, as claimed, but rather to exploit tragic situations occurring in America for the purpose of perpetuating a self-serving bureaucracy. If the problem of youth violence is to be stopped, there can be no preset agendas or preset outcomes, there can be no "sacred cows" intended to protect and perpetuate bureaucracies – everything must be on the table for discussion and debate without exception.

The low public participation in those forums that were publicized is indication that the public has little faith that the state or its bureaucracies can or will address the real problems, especially when the same could mean the scrutinizing of the bureaucracy itself. Yet it is the family that suffers as taxes are increased to fund the increased size of the bureaucracies and the ideas they perpetuate through the ever increasing, but largely failed, "prevention" programs.

According to the OSPI report on weapons-related incidents, there were 2302 incidents in 296 public schools and only 19 incidents in 372 private schools.³⁹ Bureaucrats will undoubtedly claim that this is because private schools get the "cream of the crop," and because parents are more involved in private schools. But these same bureaucrats carefully avoid discussing the fact that private schools are accountable to the people they serve, and listen to the people they serve, while public schools make no attempt to cover their disdain and ill-will toward parents, especially those who ask questions and expect answers and accountability. They also carefully avoid the fact that many parents sacrifice to put their children in private schools because public schools are not accountable and are not educating children.

Illiteracy is a known cause of juvenile violence.⁴⁰ The 1997 fourth grade assessment showed that 53% of Washington state fourth graders cannot read proficiently, while the 1997 CTBS test scores indicate that 48% of fourth graders cannot read proficiently. While bureaucrats continually try to correlate illiteracy with what they term "risk" factors, Dennis Hogenson, in *Reading Failure and Juvenile Delinquency*, states,

³⁹ "Summary of Statistics" (<http://inform.wednet.edu/pubs/weapons/weapons.html>); OSPI; Olympia, Washington.

⁴⁰ *Illiteracy and Violence: Confusion About Cause and Effect* (http://www.readingstore.com/illiteracy_and_violence_confusi.htm); Marian Hinds; Reading Reform Foundation; Tacoma, WA.

Retarding America: The Imprisonment of Potential; Micheal Brunner

Reading Failure and Juvenile Delinquency; Dennis Hogenson

The Epidemic of Reading Disabilities (<http://www.readingstore.com/EPIDEMIO.HTM>); Carl and Carolyn Kline

Illiteracy: An Incurable Disease or Education Malpractice?; Robert W Sweet, Jr; National Right to Read Foundation

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...the present study was unsuccessful in attempting to correlate aggression with age, family size, or number of parents present in the home, rural versus urban environment, socio-economic status, minority group membership, religious preference, etc. Only reading failure was found to correlate with aggression in both populations of delinquent boys. (highlighting added)

Yet curriculum, instruction, and teaching methodologies were off limits at these narrowly structured "public" forums put on across the state by OSPI and the Governor's office.

If the goal is to truly eradicate the problem of youth violence, one of the first things that should be done is to analyze the increasing number of state and federal "prevention" programs, that have been taxpayer funded year after year, to determine whether the outcomes (the result) of the programs are justified by the input of time and resources. It is reasonable to assert that these programs have not, to date, been effective, in that they have continued year after year, in many cases with increased funding; while, at the same time, the problem they have been established to address, continues to increase in incidence and intensity. For instance, we continue to fund sex education while the number of teenagers becoming pregnant has not decreased by a number significant enough to justify the continued input of time and resources. This does not constitute the effective use of taxpayer dollars. Sex education joins a plethora of other non-academic programs in the classroom that likewise have never been analyzed to determine whether they justify the continued input of time and resources, to include HIV/AIDS, death, suicide, and gang prevention programs; mentoring, conflict resolution, peer mediation, natural helper, and personal choices programs; global, environmental, and multicultural education programs.

The following quote is from the recently released report of the Committee on Education and the Workforce; Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, regarding the Safe and Drug-Free Youth Program, a primary player in the planning of the Youth Safety Summit and provider of the materials sent out by OSPI to the ESDs prior to the June 12, 1998, facilitator training meeting:

*The Safe and Drug Free Schools program is an example of a program designed to address a very real problem, but with a one-size-fits all solution that in the end accomplishes little. The program sends funds to the majority of school districts in the country, only targeting 30 percent to areas based on need. School districts often lack the funds to supplement the federal funding and implement more expensive, research based programs. Consequently, the majority of funds are used for staff training and technical assistance.*⁴¹

This study concluded that most programs funded are never evaluated to determine if they are effective in achieving the purpose for which they were established.

⁴¹ *Education at the Crossroads: What Works and What's Wasted in Education Today* (<http://www.house.gov/eeo/oversight/crossroads.htm>); Committee on Education and the Workforce; Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations; July 1998; p 33.

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On July 14, 1998, in an e-mail⁴² to all Legislators, the outcomes of the youth safety summit meetings were predicted:

1. more money for education and related programs
2. more government intervention in homes and families
3. more activities focusing on early childhood development
4. more gun control
5. more parenting programs
6. more conflict resolution programs
7. more media hype about gun violence (ignoring the far greater number of children who have been injured or killed on school grounds or in bus-related incidents that are not gun-related)

One more outcome was added within a few days of these predictions⁴³:

8. more before and after school activities in correlation with the community learning center concept.

Newspaper reports, as well as individual reports emanating from these forums, have fallen in line with these predicted outcomes. Arriving at the root causes of youth violence will not happen by handing the job over to a bureaucracy whose primary purpose is justifying its existence and expanding its power and position. The very people who can stop youth violence through debate of the issues, innovation and creativity, have been excluded from this bureaucratic process: the public.

⁴² Email of Lynn M Stuter; July 14, 1998. Outcomes derived by Roxanne Sitler and Lynn Stuter.

⁴³ Email of Lynn M Stuter, dated July 21, 1998, to Senator Harold Hochstatter, chair, Senate Education Committee.