

**Testimony Feb. 21, 2018: Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés, Diplomate Psychoanalyst, Post-Trauma Recovery Specialist at Columbine High School and Community for three years after the massacre and injuries to students and teachers, and the aftermath for the survivor families.**

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- I've practiced for 48 years as clinician for war traumatized veterans from seven deadly wars, torture victims, crime victims, murder survivors, survivor families on both coasts from 9-11, victims of earthquakes, fires and floods. I am a 21 years USAF veteran's wife.
- I'm here to reveal a harsh reality: When bullets ripped through any one child or teacher at Columbine, they also mortally wounded the hearts of the parents, siblings, children, grandparents, the beloveds, of each soul who fell. I have the unusual perspective of not voicing as one person, but speaking about the multitudes of horrified, wounded souls at Columbine and community—because our paths crossed time and again over many years.
- What is sometimes callously called 'collateral damage', in essence, that is the harms to the survivors-- debilitates far more persons who once were active, able citizens, than only the one who was wrongfully murdered.
- There were approx. 2000 young adults at Columbine, over 100 teachers. They and ALL their kin were mortally wounded that day, and STILL are so, in heart, in spirit, in their very souls and are STILL not yet recovered today even though often on ministry to warn, tend to, help others so wounded.
- I would estimate the number of persons harmed by the murders and wounded, including suicides afterward-- of the innocents at Columbine, to be in the area of more than 21,000 souls who had their birthright of sense of security in the world ripped from them without consult or consent --and who still are challenged, often daily, by what only two young men and their accomplices for gaining devastating military/law enforcement weaponry illegally, unleashed a unwarranted death ambush upon them.
- This is not hyperbole. It is fact. One bullet to a beloved --takes without asking, without consult or consent, the gentle and considered lives of the close-in survivors to live as freely afterward in soul and spirit and productivity, as they did beforehand. One bullet to a beloved destroys far far more than one person.
- I'd suggest strongly that logic and common sense be the crown each legislator ought wear with honor in this situation—and not attempting to weaken laws for the few instead of creating logical laws of utmost protection for the many innocents of our world. The children. The Catholic church by refusing to protect the innocents utterly by whatever strong means needed, those who turned their backs; their names now live in infamy. We do not want that for anyone, including our good legislators.
- Some suggest arming school teachers or others in the schools as a solution to ill persons murdering our innocent children. What could possibly go wrong? --and I say that with a grandmother's squinty eye which I know you can read into. I would only remind this in bold letters, If having a weapon to kill, to protect and defend-- was the final answer to all, please be reminded, our service men and women come back by the legions in body bags, killed often by just one bullet, shards of shrapnel, when in fact they were carrying all the firepower in the world. Having weaponry is no guarantee to protect and defend, ask any artillery vet who fought on the ground. The losses of life far too often of arms vs. arms, is devastating.
- I know you have a hard job as legislators. As a hearing officer and chair of the Colorado State Grievance Board for DORA many years, I know we listen and try hard to respond in FULL reason, for we are all under the pristine government oath that our central duty is Protection of the Public.
- Thus, I hope con el todo de corazon y alma, you will take strong steps to do just that, Protect by fullest means, without watering down, without as my father from the Old Country used to say, " The weaker you make the soup, the more people will die of starvation". That you will take all steps to protect the innocents, our children, Yours. Mine, and ours. Los todos niños and their vulnerable families. All.

Thank you.