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Final Edition

Anchorage Daily News

Saturday, December 15, 2012

BREAKING NEWS AT ADN.COM

Alaska's Newspaper

Innocents lost



'Our hearts are broken today.'



Connecticut State Police lead children from the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., after a gunman entered the school and fatally shot 20 students and six adults Friday. SHANNON HICKS / Newtown (Conn.) Bee via Associated Press

Gunman kills 26 at school, mostly children

By JAMES BARRON
 The New York Times

A 20-year-old man wearing combat gear and armed with pistols and a semi-automatic rifle killed 26 people — 20 of them children — in an attack Friday in an elementary school in wooded Connecticut. Witnesses and officials described a horrific scene as the gunman, with brutal efficiency, chose his victims in two specific classrooms while other students dove under desks and hid in closets.

Hundreds of terrified parents, fearing the worst, descended on the school in Newtown, about 65 miles north of New York City, after news of the shootings spread. Many arrived as their sobbing children were led out, each with a hand on the shoulder of the child in front. But by that time, all the victims were shot and most were dead, as was the gunman, identified as Adam Lanza, who committed suicide. The children who were killed were said to be from 5 to 10 years old.

A 28th person was found dead in a house in the town and was also believed to have been shot by Lanza. That victim, one law enforcement official said, was Lanza's mother, Nancy Lanza, a teacher at the school, Sandy Hook Elementary School.

The rampage, coming less than two weeks before Christmas, was the nation's second-deadliest school shooting, exceeded only by the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre, in which a gunman killed 32 people and then himself.

Law enforcement officials said Lanza had grown up in Newtown and he was remembered by high school classmates as smart, introverted and nervous. They said he had gone out of his way to not attract attention when he was younger. Several said they believed he suffered from Asperger's syndrome.

The gunman was chillingly accurate. A spokesman for the state police said that only one person had been injured at the school. All the others hit by the barrage of bullets died, suggesting that they were shot at point-blank range. Lanza's rifle was similar to a weapon widely used by troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

One law enforcement official said the shootings occurred in two classrooms in one portion of the school. The principal was among the dead.

Law enforcement officials offered no hint of what motivated Lanza. They were trying to determine if he suffered



A state police SWAT team member runs to a police car Friday as the school is evacuated. CLOE POISSON / Hartford (Conn.) Courant / MCT

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GUNS: Shooting rekindles national debate. **Page A-4**

Legislative aide quits over on-the-job anti-Islam activities

Ethics panel concludes that state resources were used to promote the group.

By LISA DEMER
ldemer@adn.com

A legislative aide who joined an anti-Islam group and became obsessed with its mission crossed the line and illegally used state resources to promote its interests, a state ethics panel concluded in a ruling released Friday.

Minutes after the ruling was made public, Karen Sawyer's new boss, state Rep. Shelley Hughes, R-Pal-

mer, announced that Sawyer resigned her job.

Sawyer's activism on behalf of Stop Islamization of America became an issue when she was chief of staff to Palmer Rep. Carl Gatto before his death this year. Hughes was appointed to replace Gatto on May 1.

The House subcommittee of the Select Committee on Legislative Ethics recommended that Sawyer be fired and permanently banned from rehire by the Legislature.

The far-right, anti-Islam group describes its goals as support of human rights, religious liberty and freedom of speech, and opposition to Shar-

ia, or Islamic, law. But the Southern Poverty Law Center calls it an anti-Muslim hate group, as does the Anti-Defamation League.

Sawyer allowed an operative for the anti-Islam group, a man named David Heckert, to set up shop inside the Wasilla Legislative Information Office, where he worked for months, according to one of two reports about the ethical lapses by the ethics panel that were released Friday. Sawyer let Heckert use her personal laptop and Internet card, and provided him a cellphone number under her family plan. She herself used state equipment to plan events for the group.

She even gave Heckert her key to the Wasilla LIIO so he could get in while she was out of town, the report said.

Part of her effort was loosely tied to state business. Gatto was the prime sponsor of House Bill 88, legislation aimed at barring "foreign laws" from being enforced in Alaska, which he said was an anti-Sharia measure. It got little traction in the Legislature and Hughes said in an interview Friday she doesn't see a need for such a law in Alaska.

In one report, the House subcommittee found that Sawyer's actions used public resources for the private benefit of Stop Islamization of America.

"The committee determined that Ms. Sawyer lost sight of the purpose of HB 88 and became personally and obsessively involved with SIOA and its mission," the report said. In an email in March 2011, she remarked, "My co-workers wonder if I'm getting obsessed with Sharia."

While the anti-Islam group supported House Bill 88, its main purpose was promoting itself, the report said.

Sawyer also failed to disclose her membership on the board of the anti-Islam group for 2011 and 2012,

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Mostly sunny; morning fog High 11; low -2	Partly cloudy High 11; low -5	Partly cloudy High 8; low -15

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