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THE DENVER POST

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CONNECTICUT SCHOOL SHOOTING

“We heard gunshots ... lots of gunshots.”

MAN KILLS MOM, THEN 20 KIDS AND 6 ADULTS



Connecticut state police lead a line of children from Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Conn., on Friday after a shooting at the school. Shannon Hicks, Newtown Bee

GUN-CONTROL DEBATE DEEPENS

PAST SHOOTING VICTIMS UNITE IN URGING ACTION

By Jennifer Brown and Colleen O'Connor
The Denver Post

Two days after Gov. John Hickenlooper said “the time is right” to talk about gun control, a nightmarish mass shooting at a Connecticut elementary school elevated the debate to a new height.

Survivors and families of victims of the tragedies at Columbine High and an Aurora movie theater were building a coalition to push for stricter gun laws even before Friday’s massacre of schoolchildren, holding a conference call earlier this week. The latest tragedy, three days after a shooting at a mall in Portland, Ore., intensified their charge.

“Not every bozo should be able to get a gun,” said Tom Teves, whose 24-year-old son, Alex, was one of 12 killed in July when a gunman slipped into an Aurora theater during a midnight premiere of “The Dark Knight Rises.” “You can’t give me a good reason to have an automatic weapon. If you can’t shoot a deer with one bullet and kill it, then you’re not a sportsman.”

Teves, rattled by Friday’s horror, asked: If now isn’t the day to talk about gun control, then when is?

“When are you, Mr. President, going to do something?” he asked, adding that only people who have lost someone to gun violence are qualified to understand. “Nobody, unless you’re in that club, should talk. It’s the

GUNS » 18A

By John Christoffersen The Associated Press

NEWTOWN, CONN.» A man killed his mother at their home and then opened fire Friday inside the elementary school where she taught, massacring 26 people, including 20 children, as youngsters cowered in fear to the sound of gunshots reverberating through the building and screams echoing over the intercom. The 20-year-old killer, carrying at least two handguns, committed suicide at the school, bringing the death toll to 28, authorities said.



President as parent. “Each time I learn the news, I react not as a president but as anybody else would, as a parent,” Obama said during a somber three-minute statement. It was among the most emotional moments of Obama’s presidency, comparable only to his heartfelt address in Tucson on Jan. 11, 2011, after the shooting that gravely wounded Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and left six others dead. »16A

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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 that resulted in 33 deaths.

“Our hearts are broken today,” said a tearful President Barack Obama, struggling to maintain his composure, at the White House. He called for “meaningful action” to prevent such shootings. “As a country, we have been through this too many times,” he said.

Police shed no light on the motive for the attack. The gunman, Adam Lanza, was thought to suffer from a form of autism and lived with his mother, said a law enforcement official who was briefed on the investigation but was not authorized to discuss it.

Panicked parents looking for their children raced to Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, a prosperous New England community of about 27,000 people 60 miles northeast of New York City. Police told youngsters at the school, which has kindergarten through fourth grade, to close their eyes as they were led from the building.

Law enforcement officials speaking on condition of anonymity said Lanza killed his mother, Nancy Lanza, and then drove to the school in her car with at least three guns, including a high-powered rifle that he apparently left in the back of the vehicle, and shot up two classrooms.

SHOOTING » 17A