NEWS NATION | 24/7 | AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING NETWORK IN TELEVISION

LOBBYING

Pepper spray CEO touts 'nonlethal' school safety products

BY BRANDON M. MILAZZO - UPDATED 10:00 AM EDT

Armed with a team of lobbyists, the chief of a major pepper spray manufacturer made the rounds on Capitol Hill last week to discuss "nonlethal" products that could be used to protect the nation's schools.

Rick McCann, president and CEO of Mace Security International, said he planned to convey to lawmakers that there is an alternative to using armed officers to protect students in the event of a shooting, as has been proposed in response to last year's shooting in Newtown, Conn.

[modal]"We want to bridge the gap between shooting and shooting," McCann said in an interview with The Hill last week.

One goal for the giveaways was clearing up what McCann said are common misconceptions about pepper spray.

McCann said people often ask him: "How can a little can of pepper spray stop a guy with a gun?"

"There's a lack of discussion in Washington about nonlethal methods," he said. "Because of a perception that it's not really viable."

The spray comes in a 12-ounce can, complete with a pin to lock the trigger, and can also be made in a larger bottle that's the size of a fire extinguisher.

McCann said there are great formulas capable of reaching 35 feet that stick to doors, intruders and linger in the air to disable an attacker while being airborne.

The sprays can even be equipped with a range of safety options to prevent tampering or abuse, such as fingerprint recognition technology or a coded lock.

NEWSNATION | AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING NETWORK IN TELEVISION
WATCH NOW
LIVE, FREE AND DIGITAL

Other options include a bright yellow pepper spray case that would sound an alarm to local law enforcement when opened. The company chose yellow.

McCann said, so that the plastic housing wouldn't be confused with ones holding fire extinguishers.

The visit reflects an aggressive move by Mace Security into the Washington lobbying sphere. The name of the four-decade old company has become shorthand for pepper spray and its use, but Mace has never had lobbyists in the capital — until now.

The company hired the powerhouse K Street firm Cassidy & Associates in April, just a few days before gun control legislation went down to defeat in the Senate. The legislation that was shelved included amendments that would increase funding for school security.

ZIP CODE
Verify Any action to show your zip code so you can get local news, weather, and more.
LIVE, FREE AND DIGITAL

Hiring Cassidy is part of a broader effort by McCann to revamp Mace Securities. Since becoming CEO last year, McCann has moved quickly to try and get the company out of the red and promoting its feature products and moving the company away from excess products it shed only a few years ago — including its pepper spray wash subsidiary.

McCann said he said he had no legislative agenda for his first Washington visit, but wanted to place himself in front of as many lawmakers as possible to sell them about the options available for schools and administrators to thwart intruders.

"This is step one," McCann said on Tuesday, adding he plans to return throughout the year.

He was flanked during his visit by a team of four Cassidy lobbyists, including Andrew Forbes, a former senior legislative aide to ex-Rep. Rick Keller (R-Fla.) and Retired Marine Corps Brigadier General Terry Paul, who is a former liaison between the military and the Senate.

McCann and the Cassidy team said they set up meetings with more than a dozen Democrats and Republicans from the House and Senate, including Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and Rep. Steve Chabot (R-Ohio), both from Ohio where Mace's headquarters is located.

Cassidy said the meetings with lawmakers were intended to produce "a conducive environment to having [the products] in schools."

"I'm not saying we shouldn't looking at other strategies," McCann said, "but [pepper spray] should be part" of a comprehensive school safety plan.

Lawmakers have fiercely debated how best to secure the nation's schools in response to the Newtown shooting, where a gunman murdered 20 young children and six adults at an elementary school.

In response, the National Rifle Association proposed putting an armed police force in every school. "The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun," said NRA Executive Vice President Wayne LaPierre.

In January, at least two members introduced legislation that would strike parts of the Gun-Free School Zones Act that make it illegal to "possess or discharge a firearm in a school zone," as part of an overall movement to train and arm school officials.

Several states already allow administrators and teachers to carry a registered gun with permission from principals, superintendents or other authorities, a loophole provided in that law.

President Obama looked to increase security as well, putting $230 million in grants for "improving school security" on his list of executive actions for gun control reforms.

In addition to hiring more school counselors to tackle the behavioral or mental causes of violence, Obama sought to extend a Justice Department grant program aimed at hiring law enforcement officials to guard schools.

The White House also suggested that school districts could spend federal money on creating emergency plans and "purchase school safety equipment" — what that's where Mace comes in.

"It's easy to implement, easy to train people on and very cost effective," McCann said of his company's products, adding that the members and staff he met with seemed very receptive to the idea of rolling out nonlethal solutions to schools. "It was what they wanted to hear."

"We're not protecting buildings, we're protecting kids," he said. "We have to keep that in our mind's eye."

ADD AS PREFERRED SOURCE ON GOOGLE

TAGS: CONTROL BROTHERS

Copyright 2026 Nexstar Media Inc. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.

SPONSORED CONTENT

Neurologists Research
Doctors: 5 Popular Drinks Now Tied to Memory Loss in Seniors
Dr Kellyann | Sponsored | Learn More

Chronic tinnitus has been associated with a common...
Tinnitus Relief | Sponsored | Learn More

Cognitive Decline Begins When Seniors Say These 5 Phrases. (Se...
Neurologists Research | Sponsored | Learn More

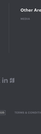
Japan's Greatest Doctors Say Memory Loss Isn't Age. Just Stop...
Neurologists Research | Sponsored | Learn More

12 THINGS TO CUT WHEN LIVING ON RETIREMENT
12 Things To Cut When Living On Retirement
Empowered Living | Sponsored | Learn more

TEMU
LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP $0
Temu Clearance Sale
Temu | Sponsored | Shop Now

This Nature Cap is Being Snapped up in Ashburn
Apparel Discounts | Sponsored | Read More

Man Over 40 Ditch Prescription Pills For This Powerful Method (T...
Health Benefit | Sponsored | Learn More


Social Security Changes Coming in 2026 That Impact Everyone
Nerdy Finance | Sponsored | Learn More

Neurologists Research
NEUROLOGISTS ALERT
Decline Begins When Seniors Say These 5 Phrases — See Which Ones
Wellness Report 360 | Sponsored

Taylor's New House Is Not What You'd Expect - See the Photo...
Real Estate | Sponsored | Learn More

Costco Shoppers Can't Get Enough of This Hair Removal Serum...
Velvet Milk | Sponsored | Learn More

She Sent Him The Link. Now He Orders 5 Every Month.
Wellness Report 360 | Sponsored | Learn More

These 3 Signs Reveal You Can Be Severely Trying to Communicate...
Health Benefit | Sponsored | Learn More

Neurologists Research
Japan's Greatest Doctors Say Memory Loss Isn't Age: Just Stop Eating These 3 Foods
Dr Kellyann | Sponsored | Learn More

Costco Shoppers Rec This Wrinkle "Serum" Is The Real Deal
Healthy Skin Tips | Sponsored | Learn More

A Billionaire's Reading List: 5 Books Cuban Says Everyone...
Blinkist Magazine | Sponsored | Learn More

CONTENT STRATEGY POWERED BY OUTBRAIN

What Do You Think?

Loading survey...

Powered by Outbrain

More Lobbying News SEE ALL

NEWS
Chamber of Commerce gets Biden's blessing for tax-free enterprise initiative
BY EMILY BROOKS
2 months ago

Video/NBC TV SEE ALL VIDEO, TV NBC NEWS, NBC NEWS

TAB HILL TV
Rising: July 28, 2026
BY TIMOTHY LEE, CYNTHIA LILLIHIS
1 day ago

TAB HILL TV
Rising: July 27, 2026
BY TIMOTHY LEE, TYRA SAW
1 day ago

TAB HILL TV
Rising: July 24, 2026
BY TIMOTHY LEE, KIARA SAW
4 days ago

Top Stories SEE ALL

SENATE
Cornyn says there's no deal on Senate GOP leader's nomination: 'They know what they have to do'
BY MATTHEW DALTON
4 minutes ago

NEWS NATION | AMERICA'S FASTEST-GROWING NETWORK IN TELEVISION

DON'T MISS A BRIEF, SIGN UP FOR OUR DAILY EMAIL.
Your Email

News
DEBATE
VIDEO
COMPANIES
FOX NEWS FOR BUSINESS
REGULATION
MEDIA
NETWORK
THE HILL NEWSROOM
POLICY

Policy
DEFENSE
CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT
HEALTHCARE
FOREIGN POLICY
INTERNATIONAL
TECHNOLOGY/AI
CYBERSECURITY
NATIONAL SECURITY
ECONOMY

Video
NEWSMAX VIDEOS CLIPS
POLITICAL VIDEOS CLIPS
THE HILL ON YOUTUBE
THE HILL - NEWSMAX
WASHINGTON POLITICS
VIDEOS

Opinion
CONTRIBUTORS TO THE HILL
COLUMNISTS
EDITORIAL BOARD
LOGIN

Resources
SUBSCRIBE
THE HILL APPS
PHONES
JOBS
PAGE EDITION

Other Areas
JOBS

Contributors
BECOME A CONTRIBUTOR

About Us
THE HILL STAFF
DIRECTORY
SPONSORSHIPS
CONTACT SUPPORT

Follow Us On
Get the App

PRIVACY POLICY | DO NOT SELL
TERMS & CONDITIONS | CONTACT | ADVERTISE | SUBSCRIBE TO NEWSPAPER EDITION

Take the search out of your research at BESTREVIEWS
CLICK TO START