

Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America

Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence

February 28, 2018

School shootings and widespread community gun violence are far greater in the United States than other nations. America cannot be great and realize its promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness if our children are not safe from gun violence.

Although security measures are important, a focus on simply preparing for shootings is insufficient. We need a change in mindset and policy from reaction to prevention. Prevention entails more than security measures and begins long before a gunman comes to school. We need a comprehensive public health approach to gun violence that is informed by scientific evidence and free from partisan politics.

A public health approach to protecting children as well as adults from gun violence involves three levels of prevention: (1) universal approaches promoting safety and well-being for everyone; (2) practices for reducing risk and promoting protective factors for persons experiencing difficulties; and (3) interventions for individuals where violence is present or appears imminent.

On the first level we need:

1. A national requirement for all schools to assess school climate and maintain physically and emotionally safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and assault;
2. A ban on assault-style weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips, and products that modify semi-automatic firearms to enable them to function like automatic firearms.

On the second level we need:

3. Adequate staffing (such as counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers) of coordinated school- and community-based mental health services for individuals with risk factors for violence, recognizing that violence is not intrinsically a product of mental illness;
4. Reform of school discipline to reduce exclusionary practices and foster positive social, behavioral, emotional, and academic success for students;
5. Universal background checks to screen out violent offenders, persons who have been hospitalized for violence towards self or others, and persons on no-fly, terrorist watch lists.

On the third level we need:

6. A national program to train and maintain school- and community-based threat assessment teams that include mental health and law enforcement partners. Threat assessment programs should include practical channels of communication for persons to report potential threats as well as interventions to resolve conflicts and assist troubled individuals;
7. Removal of legal barriers to sharing safety-related information among educational, mental health, and law enforcement agencies in cases where a person has threatened violence;
8. Laws establishing Gun Violence Protection Orders that allow courts to issue time-limited restraining orders requiring that firearms be recovered by law enforcement when there is evidence that an individual is planning to carry out acts against others or against themselves.

Congress and the executive branch must remove barriers to gun violence research and institute a program of scientific research on gun violence that encompasses all levels of prevention. We contend that well-executed laws can reduce gun violence while protecting all Constitutional rights.

It's time for federal and state authorities to take immediate action to enact these proposals and provide adequate resources for effective implementation. We call on law enforcement, mental health, and educational agencies to begin actions supporting these prevention efforts. We ask all parents and youth to join efforts advocating for these changes, and we urge voters to elect representatives who will take effective action to prevent gun violence in our nation.

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(in alphabetical order)

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National Organizations Endorsing This Statement

Alliance for Excellent Education
American Academy of Social Work and Social Welfare
American Art Therapy Association
American Association for Psychoanalysis in Clinical Social Work
American Association of University Women (AAUW)
American Council for School Social Work
American Counseling Association
American Dance Therapy Association
American Federation of Teachers
American Psychoanalytic Association
American Psychological Association
American Psychological Association Teachers of Psychology in Secondary Schools
Association for Ambulatory Behavioral Healthcare
Association for Positive Behavior Support
Association of Educational Service Agencies (AESA)
Behavioral Institute for Children and Adolescents
Campaign for Trauma-Informed Policy and Practice
Center for MH in Schools & Student/Learning Supports
Center for School Climate and Learning
Children's Mental Health Network
Clinical Social Work Association
Coalition for Juvenile Justice
Coalition for the Advancement and Application of Psychological Science
Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)
Committee for Children
Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)
Council of Administrators of Special Education
Council of Combined and Integrated Doctoral Programs in Psychology (CCIDPIP)
Council of Directors of School Psychology Programs
Council of University Directors of Clinical Psychology
Division of Educational Psychology, American Psychological Association

Global Alliance for Behavioral Health and Social Justice
GLSEN
International Bullying Prevention Association
International Charter For Compassion
International Charter For Compassion Women and Girls
Justice Policy Institute
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Maestral International
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association for Family, School, and Community Engagement (NAFSCE)
National Association for Professional Development Schools (NAPDS)
National Association of County Behavioral Health and Developmental Disability Directors
National Association of School Psychologists
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Association of Social Workers
National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE)
National Association of State Head Injury Administrators
National Center for School Mental Health
National Council of Schools and Programs of Professional Psychology (NCSPP)
National Education Association
National Federation of Families for Children's Mental Health
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Juvenile Justice Network
National Latina/o Psychological Association
National Partnership to End Interpersonal Violence
National PTA
National Register of Health Service Psychologists
National School Climate Center - NSCC
Parent Revolution
Protect All Children's Environment
Public Advocacy for Kids
Roots & Wings Institute for Family Excellence
Sandy Hook Promise
School Psychology, Division 16 of the American Psychological Association
School Social Work Association of America
School-Based Health Alliance
Search Institute
SEL for Prevention
Society for Community Research and Action
Society for Prevention Research
Society of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology, Division 53 of the American Psychological Association
Society of Counseling Psychology, Division 17, American Psychological Association
The Child and Family Evidence Based Practice Consortium
The Mental Health-Education Integration Consortium
The National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (NaBITA)
Trainers of School Psychologists
University Council for Educational Administration

Additional Organizations Endorsing This Statement

#CompassionConvos
Act Yakima
Adler University
African American Child Wellness Institute - Minnesota
Alberti Center for the Prevention of Bullying Abuse and School Violence, University at Buffalo
Alfred University

Arizona Association of School Psychologists
Asociación de Psicología Escolar de Puerto Rico (APEP)
Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors
Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania
Atlanta Behavioral Health Advocates, Emory University School of Medicine Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Baltimore City Association of School Psychologists
Baltimore County School Psychologists' Association
Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education (Case Western Reserve University)
Bullying Research Network
California Association of School Psychologists
Center for Behavioral Education and Research
Center for Nonviolence & Peace Studies, University of Rhode Island
Center for Research on School Safety, School Climate and Classroom Management at Georgia State University
Center for Social Work Education, Widener University
Center X, UCLA
Central Michigan University School Psychology Program
Chicvara & Associates, LLC
Child Health and Development Institute
Clover Educational Consulting Group
Cognitive Health Solutions, LLC
College of Education and Human Development, University of Maine
Colorado Society of School Psychologists
Common Ground
Connecticut Association of School Psychologists
Connecticut Psychological Association
Contra Costa Community College District
Daniel L. Goodwin College of Education
Danville Area School District
Delaware Association of School Psychologists
Delaware Psychological Services
Department of Educational Psychology, Baylor University
Department of Teaching and Learning, School of Education and Human Development, University of Southern Maine
Family Services Network
Family Therapy Center of Boulder
Fizika Group
Florida Association of School Psychologists
Full Circle Community and Wellness
Futures Without Violence
Goleta Union School District
Gretchen Brion-Meisels, Harvard Graduate School of Education
HIGH IMPACT Mission-based Consulting and Training
Howard University School Psychology Program
ICONS - Individuals Collectively Overcoming Negative Situations
Illinois Chapter of American Dance Therapy Association
Illinois School Counselor Association
Illinois School Psychologists Association
Indivisible CD 19
Institute on Violence, Abuse and Trauma
Instructional Research Group
International Association of Rehabilitation Professionals - Illinois Chapter
Iowa School Psychologists Association
Jack, Joseph and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences, Case Western Reserve University
Journal of Applied School Psychology
Judge Baker Children's Center
Justice and Serious Mental Illness
Lancaster Pediatric Associates

Lee'sSummit4SafeSchools
Literacy, Language, and Culture Department, University of Southern Maine
Little Sisters of the Assumption
Lives in the Balance
Louisiana School Psychological Association
Maine Resilience Building Network
Maryland School Psychologists Association
Massachusetts School Psychologists Association
McDermott-Sitzman Associates,PC
Metamorphosis Life Revitalizing Center, LLC
Michigan Association of School Psychologists
Michigan Psychological Association
Midwest PBIS Network
Midwest School Social Workers Council
Midwest Symposium for Leadership in Behavior Disorders (MSLBD)
Minnesota Public Health Association
Minnesota School Psychologists Association
Minnesota School Psychology Association
Minnesota School Social Workers Association (MSSWA)
Missouri Association of School Psychologists
Missouri Prevention Center, University of Missouri
Montana Association of School Psychologists
Montgomery County School Psychologists' Association (MCSPA)
Move Forward New York - Gun Control Task Force
MVP Pediatric and Urgent Care
National Association of Social Workers -Colorado Chapter
National Shattering Silence Coalition
Neag School of Education
Nebraska School Psychologists Association
Nevada Association of School Psychologists
New Directions Counseling Services
New Hampshire Association of School Psychologists
New Jersey Association of School Psychologists
New Leaders
New York Association of School Psychologists
NYC Leadership Academy
Office of Psychological Services, Baltimore County Public Schools
Ohio Psychological Association
Ohio School Psychologists Association
Oregon School Psychologists Association
Paris Union School District No. 95
Philadelphia Society of Clinical Psychologists (PSCP): The Psychology Network
PINE FORGE FARMS THERAPY CENTER
Portland (Maine) Public Schools
Prevention Section of the Society of Counseling Psychology, American Psychological Association.
Public Advocacy for Kids
Rainstorms to Rainbows
Respectful Ways Social Emotional Learning Curriculum
Rhode Island School Psychologists Association
Rio Grande Community Farm
Safe & Humane Schools within the Institute on Family & Neighborhood Life, Clemson University
San Diego State University - School Psychology Program
School of Social Work, Leadership, & Youth Advocacy, Wheelock College
School Psychologists Association of Anne Arundel County
South Carolina Association of School Psychologists
Strategies for Youth, Inc.

Student Advocacy Inc.
 Students for Peace and Social Justice, Elon University
 Summit Area Indivisible
 Summit Counseling Center
 Summit County Progressive Democrats
 Team Up for Families
 Texas Association of School Psychologists
 The Connecticut Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
 The Melissa Institute for Violence Prevention and Treatment
 The Salem Center for Therapy, Training and Research
 The South Carolina Education Association
 The Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory (TOPLAB), New York/New England
 Trinity Washington University
 University of Kentucky School Psychology Program
 University of Maryland School of Social Work
 UpBeat NYC
 USC Rossier School of Education
 USC Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work
 Utah Association of School Psychologists
 Vermont Association of School Psychologists
 Violence Prevention Initiative, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
 Washington State Association of School Psychologists (WSASP)
 Wayne State University--School & Community Psychology program
 West Valley Resistance ASAP- Active Shooter Action Program
 West Virginia Psychological Association
 Wheelock College
 Wisconsin School Psychologists Association

Excerpts from List of Individuals Endorsing This Statement

[\(A complete list of over 4,000 individuals endorsing this document is available\)](#)

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