

April 16, 2013

Dear Senator:

As the Senate debates how to make the nation safer for its children, we the undersigned national, state and local organizations urge you to protect children by expanding federal funding to increase positive school safety measures, by requiring universal background checks for all gun purchases, and by prohibiting the sale of ammunition magazines holding more than ten rounds of ammunition.

In 2010 more young children under age five were killed by guns than the number of law enforcement officers who died from guns in the line of duty. That year a child or teen was injured by a gun every 30 minutes and a child or teen died from gun violence every three hours and 15 minutes. Universal background checks, a ban on high capacity magazines and increased funding for positive school safety measures will help protect children from the gun violence that threatens their lives every day.

It is essential that schools remain a safe haven for learning. Although less than two percent of child gun homicides occur in schools, children cannot learn if they do not feel safe. Therefore we urge you to take steps to ensure schools remain safe through additional federal funding for evidence-based practices including placing more mental health professionals and counselors in schools; providing wrap-around services for vulnerable children; implementing school-wide positive behavioral supports; teaching children how to resolve conflict peacefully; creating a positive school climate based on good communication between children, parents and educators; and securing schools by locking doors from the outside as school begins, not by using armed security guards or police officers. There is no evidence that armed security guards or police officers will keep children safer in schools.

Keeping guns away from underage or dangerous persons is essential to keeping children safe. Today in most states anyone can buy a gun without a background check if they purchase it from a private seller. A universal background check requirement for all purchasers is sound policy. More than two million gun purchases have been denied since the existing system was launched in 1994. Our organizations urge you to stand with the close to 90 percent of Americans and the 85 percent of gun owners who support universal background checks and vote to close this deadly loophole.

We urge you to restore the ban on large capacity magazines with more than 10 rounds of ammunition, which have increased the deadliness of many recent mass shootings. Murderers with large capacity magazines were able to kill more people at a faster rate in massacres at Virginia Tech (32 dead), Fort Hood (13 dead), Tucson (six dead), Aurora (12 dead), and Newtown (26 dead). Restoring the ban on high capacity magazines is an essential step to protect children.

The Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre woke up the nation to epidemic gun violence that has taken the lives of an estimated 166,500 children and teens since 1963, the equivalent of over 8,300 classrooms of 20 children.

We urge you to vote for common sense positive school safety measures, universal background checks and limits on high capacity magazines to ensure child and community safety.

Sincerely yours,

National Organizations

Advocates for Environmental Human Rights
The Alliance of New Schools of Thought, Inc.
African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church
American Professional Society on the Abuse of Children
Americans for Indian Opportunity
Association of University Centers on Disabilities
Black Administrators in Child Welfare
Brainstormers, Inc.
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Children's Defense Fund
Child Welfare League of America
Coalition on Human Needs
The Education Trust
Elev8
Every Child Matters
Futures Without Violence
Global Justice Institute
Gray Panthers
Grey Nuns of the Sacred Heart
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters
Human Rights Project for Girls
Institute of the Sisters of Mercy
International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
Jewish Women International
Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence
Leadership Council of the Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Million Mom March Chapters
Moms Demand Action For Gun Sense in America
MomsRising.org

National Adoption Center
National African American Drug Policy Coalition, Inc.
National Alliance of Children's Trust and Prevention Funds
National Assembly on School-Based Health Care
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Black Child Development Institute
National Foster Youth Action Network
National Network for Youth
National Physicians Alliance
NETWORK- A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby
Our Bodies Ourselves
Parents Anonymous, Inc.
PHI- Quality Care through Quality Jobs
The Peace Alliance
Provincial Council of the Clerics of St. Viator
Protest Easy Guns
Southern Poverty Law Center
Reconciling Works: Lutherans for Full Participation
Religious Institute, Inc.
United Methodist Women
UniteWomen.org
Union for Reform Judaism
U.S. Province of the Union of the Sisters of the Blessed Virgin Mary
W. Haywood Burns Institute
Youth Build USA
ZERO TO THREE

State Organizations*

Alabama

Youth Development Association, Inc.

Arizona

Moms Demand Action Chapter, Tucson, AZ

California

California-Hawaii NAACP Youth and College Division
California School Health Centers Association
Catalina's List

Children's Defense Fund-California
Peace Over Violence
Restorative Schools Vision Project
A World Fit for Kids!, Los Angeles, CA
CDI/Choices for Children, Morgan Hill, CA
Happy Campers Preschool, San Carlos, CA
Inland Empire Do Peace and Nonviolence Alliance, Fontana, CA
Lauren's House 4 Positive Change Inc., East Palo Alto, CA
St. Mary's Center, Oakland, CA
Success in Challenges, Inc., Long Beach, CA
United Way of Santa Cruz County, Capitola, CA

Colorado

Colorado Ceasefire
Family Visitor Programs, Glenwood Springs, CO

Connecticut

Collaborative Center for Justice
Connecticut Association for Human Services
National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter
Bridgeport Child Advocacy Coalition, Bridgeport, CT
Moms Demand Action-West Hartford, West Hartford, CT

District of Columbia

Students Advocating for Youth, Howard University
Uplift, Inc.

Florida

Farmworker Association of Florida, Inc.
Florida Consumer Action Network
Peace and Justice Committee, Benedictine Sisters of Florida
Aloma Methodist Early Childhood Learning Center, Winter Park, FL
Grassroots Women, Tallahassee, FL
Healthy Start Coalition of Orange County, Orlando, FL
Miami Children's Initiative, Miami, FL
North Central Dade Coalition, Inc., Miami, FL
Sojourner Truth Center, St. Petersburg, FL
Sweet Vine Outreach and Prevention Services, Homestead, FL
Tomorrow Matters, Tampa, FL
We R 4 Kids, Sarasota, FL

Georgia

Georgia Alliance to End Homelessness

Georgia Rural Urban Summit

Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline, Snellville, GA

Partnership for Southern Equity, Atlanta, GA

Social Justice Guild of the First Existentialist Congregation of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA

Idaho

Moms Demand Action-Idaho

Illinois

Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition

Illinois School Psychologists Association

Community Action Partnership of Lake County, Waukegan, IL

Zion Community Focus Group, Zion, IL

Iowa

Iowans for Gun Safety

Children and Family Urban Ministries, Des Moines, IA

Grandparents and Others United for Positive Changes, Clinton, IA

Indiana

Phoenix Institute

Moms Demand Action-Greater Lafayette Chapter, Lafayette, IN

Kansas

Keys for Networking

Kentucky

Sisters of Charity of Nazareth Western Province Leadership, Nazareth, KY

Moms Demand Action Chapter, Lebanon Junction, KY

Louisiana

Children's Defense Fund-Louisiana

Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

Campti Community Development Center, Campti, LA

EXCELth, INC, New Orleans, LA

Maine

Moms Demand Action-Southern Maine Chapter
Grace House for Women, Portland, ME

Maryland

Benedictine Sisters of Baltimore, Baltimore, MD
Montgomery Country Commission for Women, Rockville, MD

Massachusetts

Justice and Witness Council, Massachusetts Conference, United Church of Christ
Grandmothers Against Gun Violence, Cummaquid, MA
Sisters of St. Joseph of Springfield, MA

Michigan

Michigan Million Mom March
Michigan Universal Health Care Access Network (MichUHCAN)
Student Advocacy Center of Michigan
Mid Michigan/Lansing, Moms Demand Action, East Lansing, MI
Moms Demand Action-Northern and Traverse City, Leland, MI
Moms Demand Action-Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids, MI
NSO-Youth Initiatives Project, Detroit, MI

Minnesota

A Minnesota Without Poverty
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota
Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota
Minnesota Council of Child Caring Agencies
EMERGE, Minneapolis, MN
Protect Minnesota: Working to End Community Violence
Jewish Community Action, St. Paul, MN
Minneapolis Youth Congress, Minneapolis, MN

Mississippi

Center for Education Innovation
Children's Defense Fund-Southern Regional Office
Just Advocacy of Mississippi
Mississippi Center for Justice
Southern Echo, Inc.
The Young People's Project
Activists With A Purpose, Grenada, MS

City of Leland Southern Rural Black Women Human Rights Initiative, Leland, MS
Jackson Teen Parent Program, Jackson, MS
Friends of Children of Mississippi, Inc., Jackson, MS
Fannie Lou Hamer Center For Change, Europa, MS
Mound Bayou Area SRBWI Human Rights Commission, Mound Bayou, MS

Missouri

Moms Demand Action-MO/Kansas City, Blue Springs, MO
Kansas City Criminal Justice Task Force, Kansas City, MO

Montana

Moms Demand Action, Montana Chapter

New Jersey

New Jersey State Industrial Union Council
Camden City Multicultural Committee of Mayor's Youth Council, Camden, NJ
Concerned Citizens Coalition, Jersey City, NJ
CWA Local 1081, Newark, NJ
Episcopal Diocese of Newark-Justice Board, Newark, NJ

New York

Children's Defense Fund-New York
New York State Citizens' Coalition for Children
Sisters of the Good Shepherd
St. Ann's Anti Violence Project
Claire Heureuse Community Center, Inc., Jamaica, NY
Good Shepherd Services, New York, NY
Henry Street Settlement, New York, NY
Mom's Demand Action-Greater NYC, New York, NY
North Country Children's Clinic, Watertown, NY
People for Positive Action, Plattsburgh, NY
Public Health Solutions, New York, NY
Uniondale Early Childhood Center, Uniondale, NY
Violence Intervention Program, New York, NY

North Dakota

Children's Defense Fund-North Dakota
Mom's Demand Action-North Dakota Chapter

Ohio

Children's Defense Fund-Ohio
Moms Demand Action-Ohio Chapter
Ohio Children's Foundation
Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence
Ohio National Organization for Women
Greater Hilltop Area Shalom Zone, Columbus, OH

Oregon

Oregon-Idaho Conference Chapter, Methodist Federation for Social Action

Pennsylvania

Cease Fire PA
Disabled in Action
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Benedictines for Peace-Erie, Erie, PA
Bucks County Women's Advocacy Coalition, Doylestown, PA
Moms Demand Action-Pittsburgh Chapter, Pittsburgh, PA
Moms Demand Action-Southeastern Pennsylvania and Philadelphia, Philadelphia, PA
Nazareth Housing Services, Pittsburgh, PA
Three Rivers Adoption Council, Pittsburgh, PA

South Carolina

Defenders for Children, Greenville, SC

Tennessee

The Varnell Foundation, Madison, TN

Texas

Children's Defense Fund-Texas
Education Equals Making Community Connections
Senior Community Outreach Services, Inc.
Proyecto Azteca, San Juan TX
Houston's Youth Program for Enrichment, Houston, TX
Greenville Avenue Child Development Center, Richardson, TX

Vermont

Gun Sense Vermont

Virginia

Social Action Linking Together

Concerned Citizens Against Gun Violence, Falls Church, VA

Grandmothers, Mothers, and Women Saving Our Children (GMWSOC), Norfolk, VA

Hampton Roads Network for Nonviolence, Virginia Beach, VA

Herndon-Reston Alliance to End Gun Violence, Reston, VA

Horizons Unlimited Youth and Family Development, Hampton, VA

Million Mom March of Northern Virginia, Burke, VA

Moms Demand Action-Richmond Chapter, Richmond, VA

Moms Demand Action-VA, Southwest and Roanoke, Roanoke, VA

Moms Demand Action-VA, Tidewater and Eastern Shore

Prince William County Alliance to End Gun Violence, Haymarket, VA

Washington

Children's Alliance

Faith Action Network

Triumph Treatment Services, Yakima, WA

Wisconsin

Metro Regional Office Wisconsin United Methodist Conference

YWCA-Madison, Madison, WI

Wyoming

Apple Tree Learning Center, Casper, WY

* Organizations without a city noted are statewide organizations.