



Talking Points Gun Violence Prevention 2018

General Talking Points:

- In the United States, over 30,000 people are killed by guns each year, and almost 76,000 new people become survivors of gun violence each year.
- The rate of gun violence in the U.S. is 25 times higher than in any other developed country.
- Black people are disproportionately affected by gun violence in the United States. Black men are 13 times more likely than non-Hispanic white men to be shot and killed with guns, and the gun death rate for Black children and teens was nearly four times that for White children and teens.
- In 2016, 43 percent of gun deaths were among Black children and teens, although they made up only 14 percent of all children and teens. 1,335 Black children and teens were killed by guns in 2016, one every 6 hours and 34 minutes.
- Assault weapons have been used in many of the recent, high-profile shootings, including the deadly massacres in Parkland, Las Vegas, Sutherland Springs, Orlando, San Bernardino, and Sandy Hook.
- A review of mass shootings between 2009 and 2015 found that incidents in which assault weapons or large capacity ammunition magazines were used resulted in 155 percent more people shot and 47 percent more people killed compared to other incidents.
- Compared with the 10-year period before the assault weapons ban was implemented in 1994, the number of gun massacres (incidents in which 6 or more people were killed) during the ban (1994-2004) fell by 37 percent, and the number of people dying from gun massacres fell by 43 percent. After the ban lapsed in 2004, the numbers skyrocketed again — an astonishing 183 percent increase in massacres and a 239 percent increase in massacre deaths.
- 22 percent of guns sold in the U.S. are sold by unlicensed sellers, which include guns sold at gun shows and online. Private sales do not require Brady background checks, allowing unqualified and potentially dangerous people to gain easy access to guns.
- 97 percent of the American public, including gun owners, support universal background checks for all gun sales.
- Since its implementation in 1994, the Brady Bill has blocked more than 3 million gun sales to prohibited purchasers including felons, domestic abusers, and other dangerous individuals.

Values:

- Leviticus 19:16 tells us, “do not stand idly by while your neighbor’s blood is shed.” We, as people of faith, cannot stand by and watch as thousands of people are directly impacted by gun violence year after year.

- The Quran (5:23) says that the killing of one innocent person is tantamount to killing the whole human race, and it (4:5) warns us to not put our resources in the hands of people who may use them to endanger themselves and others.
- Jesus consistently challenged his followers to choose a non-violent path. Luke 22:51 teaches us “All who live by the sword will die by the sword,” and Matthew 5:44 instructs us to “Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you.”
- The Prophet Isaiah exhorts the people of the earth to “beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks” (Isaiah 2:4). We are commanded to shun weapons of destruction and embrace initiatives that benefit our society.

Legislative Asks:

The Assault Weapons Ban of 2017 and 2018 (S.2095 & H.R. 5087)

In the 115th Congress, the Assault Weapons Ban of 2017 (S.2095) was introduced by Sen. Dianne Feinstein following the mass shooting in Sutherlands Springs, Texas. After the massacre in Parkland, Reps. Cicilline and Deutch introduced the Assault Weapons Ban of 2018 in the House.

The bill would ban the sale, manufacture, transfer and importation of 205 military-style assault weapons by name, and it bans any assault weapon that accepts a detachable ammunition magazine and has one or more military characteristics. These include features such as pistol grips, forward grips, barrel shrouds, threaded barrels or folding or telescoping stocks. Further, the bill would ban magazines and other ammunition feeding devices that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition, which allow shooters to quickly fire many rounds without needing to reload.

The bill specifically exempts more than 2,200 guns used for hunting, household defense or recreational purposes and it includes a grandfather clause that exempts all weapons lawfully possessed at the date of enactment. Sen. Feinstein’s bill would also ban bump-fire stocks and other devices that allow semi-automatic weapons to fire at fully automatic rates, such as the devices used by the shooter during the massacre in Las Vegas.

The Background Check Expansion Act (S.2009)

The Background Check Expansion Act (S.2009) was introduced by Sen. Chris Murphy in October 2017, following the mass shooting in Las Vegas. As federal law stands, a gun sold by an unlicensed firearms dealer online, at a gun show, or through a private sale, does not require a federal background check. Studies have shown that at least one in five guns sold in the U.S. are sold without a Brady background check. The Background Check Expansion Act will expand the federal background check requirement to include the sale or transfer of all firearms by private sellers, including those sales conducted online or at a gun show.

The Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2017 (H.R.4240)

The bipartisan Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2017 was introduced by Representatives King and Thompson on November 3, 2017. The bill expands background checks to cover all commercial firearm sales, including those at gun shows and over the internet. The bill seeks to address the private sale loophole, which allows guns sold by an unlicensed firearms dealer online, at a gun show, or through a private sale, to proceed without a federal background check.