



POSITION STATEMENT

February 22, 2018

As leaders and educators in CT, where a heart-breaking and tragic school shooting took place at Sandy Hook in 2012, we feel that we have a special obligation to raise our voices in the aftermath of yet another school shooting, this time in Florida, and say, this is wrong. It is wrong that a disturbed individual should be able to acquire the means to destroy so many lives and impact a community for generations to come. It is wrong that so many disturbed individuals do not receive the treatment that they need. School safety and mental health should not be secondary concerns in any society. The idea that Americans can send their children to school every day and not be totally confident that they will come home again is unconscionable. The fact that our teachers and school staff must worry about their safety is ludicrous.

While we mourn the lives lost and potential of so many young people not realized, we must take action to ensure that no other community experiences such horror.

Please join us in calling upon our leaders in Washington, and across the country, to take action to end what has become an epidemic of senseless violence in our nation, and to support the principles set forth below.

First, we need sensible gun laws at the federal level and across the country that appropriately safeguard public safety. In the wake of Connecticut's own tragedy at Sandy Hook, we took action to expand the state's ban on assault weapons and banned large-capacity magazines such as the ones used in Florida.

However, state lines are porous, and statutes such as Connecticut's only go so far. We must also ensure that mandatory background checks for individuals seeking to purchase guns keep weapons out of the hands of those who pose a danger to our communities.

We must invest in the security of our schools. While we don't want to turn our education settings into imposing fortresses, we have a responsibility to our students and staff to ensure that they can feel safe and secure as they devote themselves to the studies that will prepare them for adulthood. Connecticut has led this effort and continues to make funding school security infrastructure a priority despite the state's fiscal situation.

Finally, we need to operate more effectively as a Connecticut community and as a nation to identify individuals at risk of committing acts of violence such as these and ensure they have access to and receive the services and interventions necessary to avert the outcomes that we mourn today. In many cases, these individuals have raised flags prior to acting. We need to fund the mental health and counseling services that allow individuals to address the traumas they may be experiencing and resolve them in a healthy manner and not through acts of unthinkable horror such as Sandy Hook and most recently, Parkland, Florida. "

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