

Adopt Comprehensive Gun Restrictions to End Mass Shootings

WHEREAS, the United States is an outlier amongst other nations in its relationship with firearms;

- in which the population of United States, while comprising only 5% of the world's total population, holds 31% of the mass shooters in the globe;
- in which gun rate homicides are 25.2 times higher in the United States, as compared to other high-income nations, including but not limited to: the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden, Japan, South Korea, Spain, Canada, France, and Austria;
- in which gun-related suicides are 8 times higher in the United States than in other high-income nations;
- in which the United States holds more guns per capita than residents of any other nation, the second highest number of guns per capita being found in the nation of Yemen, where civil war has raged since 2015; and

WHEREAS, the February 14, 2018 shooting was committed by an expelled student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, with an AR-15 rifle, continues the pattern of mass shootings that are at the center of the American gun tragedy that has gone on far too long; and

WHEREAS, NOW recognizes that 122 deaths have occurred due to school shootings since Columbine in 1999, and will continue unless measures are taken to deliberately protect students; and

WHEREAS, the number of mass shootings in the U.S. over the period January 1, 2013 through February, 2018, indicate a dramatic increase in incidents with 1,624 shootings in 1,870 days or a mass shooting in nine of every ten days, with a total of 8,563 killed and injured persons; and

WHEREAS, on the night of October 1, 2017, a gunman armed with automatic weapons opened fire on a crowd of concert goers at the Route 91 Harvest music festival on the Las Vegas Strip in Nevada leaving 58 people dead and 851 injured.

WHEREAS, while the Second Amendment has been interpreted to protect individual gun ownership rights, the free ownership of assault weapons with high capacity magazines which increase the number of persons killed and injured in mass shootings, represents a danger to society at large; and

WHEREAS, the Second Amendment has been misinterpreted having been intended to protect the country from foreign hostile invasion, utilizing the terminology of a "well armed militia" to mean the armed forces; and

WHEREAS, it has long been noted, most especially by Everytown for Gun Safety, that numerous instances of mass shooting involve a perpetrator's history of domestic violence, as evidenced by the fact that;

- 54% of mass shootings – defined as incidents where more than four people were shot and killed – resulted in the deaths of intimate partners or family members; and
- About 4.5 million living American women have been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner; and
- A woman is five times more likely to be shot and killed in a domestic violence situation if a gun is present; and

WHEREAS, existing background checks, to be completed in three business days under the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, may not be completed in due course, allowing for gun sales sans background checks, as evidenced by the FBI leaving 3.57% of over 8.6 million gun checks incomplete in 2017; and

WHEREAS, legislation introduced to date contains a dangerous loophole in that it does not require those given or sold guns by family or “friends” to submit to background checks, noting additionally the nebulous nature of who may be legally considered a “friend”; and

WHEREAS, noting that, despite the efforts of the current President, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) does not have the authority without congressional action to facilitate a ban on bump stocks or any firearm components that may increase the firing rate of a gun; and

WHEREAS states that require background checks on all handgun sales experience 47% fewer women shot to death by their partners, only fifteen states require abusers subject to final domestic violence restraining orders to turn in their guns; and

WHEREAS, noting that gun-related homicides are lower in states with more extensive regulations as relates to licensing and purchase of guns, including such states as, but not limited to, Maryland, Massachusetts, Iowa, Oregon, Washington and Colorado; and

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that NOW supports measures promoting gun control and elimination, including greater regulations concerning the sales of guns and granting of gun licenses for firearms of all types and the banning of sales of any semi-automatic and automatic firearms and high capacity ammunition magazines; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the following provisions be adopted in federal legislation, such as, but not limited to:

- Universal background checks during both licensing and sales processes, to clarify previous instances of violence and/or threats of violence against one’s self or another party and deny this person the use of a firearm;
- A prohibition on licensed dealers to sell a firearm to an unlicensed individual before a background check, as in S. 1923 (The Background Check Completion Act of 2017)

- The reinstatement of the ban on assault weapons in effect prior to 2004, along with the proposed ban on the possession, importation, manufacture or sale of semiautomatic weapons, as outlined in S. 2095 (Assault Weapons Ban of 2017);
- Age restrictions prohibiting the ownership of guns of those under 21 years of age;
- A ban on the importation, manufacturing, transferal, or sale of components that accelerate the firing rate of a semi-automatic firearm, such as trigger cranks and bump-fire devices, as outlined in S. 1916 (Automatic Gunfire Prevention Act)
- The seizure of guns from those found, after a report is made by family members, to possess guns and represent a danger to themselves or others, as described in H.R. 2598 (The Gun Violence Restraining Order Act of 2017);
- Criminal charges with regards to trafficking or conspiring to traffic firearms as described in H.R. 1692 and S. 1185 (The Countering Illegal Firearms Trafficking to Mexico Act and the Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act of 2017); and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that NOW members and supporters strongly urge NOW's Political Action Committee (NOW PAC) to adopt a policy opposing candidates who refuse to support stricter gun controls and/or receive funding from the National Rifle Association or any other organization which lobbies against common sense gun controls, and to aid in the election of candidates who will sponsor or co-sponsor and take a leadership role in advocating for passage of stricter gun control legislation, as noted in this resolution.