

# ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

## Act to Prevent Gun Violence

*The Temple Shalom Gun Violence Victims Memorial (October 20 to November 9, 2019) displays a “cemetery” of t-shirts bearing the names of people in the Greater Washington community who lost their lives to gun violence in 2019. It also memorializes those who died in the mass shootings at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on October 27, 2018, and the Chabad of Poway synagogue in California on April 27, 2019. The goal of this memorial is to heighten public awareness of the tragedy that results from gun violence and to encourage people to support sensible gun legislation at all levels of government.*

### ***Jewish Values Call Us to Act***

Jewish tradition emphasizes the sanctity and value of human life. The Bible commands us, "Thou shalt not murder" (Exodus 20:13), and we are instructed "Do not stand idly by the blood of your neighbor" (Leviticus 19:16). Scripture encourages peaceful pursuit of our mutual welfare. We are commanded to turn weapons of destruction into tools for the greater good of society (Isaiah 2:4). The Union for Reform Judaism makes gun violence prevention a top priority and, over the years, has encouraged greater efforts to promote gun safety, recognizing that gun regulation is "a vital necessity."

### ***Gun Violence is a National Issue***

- *Each day, an average of 100 Americans—including children and teens—die from gun violence.*
- *Every month, at least 52 American women are shot and killed by an intimate partner.*
- *Americans kill each other with guns 25 times more often than in other developed countries.*
- *The United States has 5% of the world's population, but its citizens own 42% of the world's guns.*

### ***Gun Violence is a Local Issue***

As of September 30, 2019, 168 people in the Washington metropolitan area had been killed by guns. This figure is homicides only--the number increases when adding gun suicides.

### ***September 2019 Polls Show Strong Public Support for Gun Violence Prevention Measures***

- 89% support expanding federal background checks to cover private sales and gun show transactions.
- 86% support “red flag” laws allowing removal of guns from people thought to be a danger to themselves or others.
- 60% support a national ban on gun magazines holding more than 10 rounds of ammunition.

### ***Priority Legislation is Now Pending***

**Universal Background Checks.** The US House of Representatives passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019, also known as HR 8, to close dangerous loopholes and require a background check for every gun sale. **The Senate has not voted on its companion bill, S 42.**

**Gun Violence Research.** In 1996, Congress stopped funding gun violence research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). To make our communities safer, we must understand the causes of gun violence so that we can better develop policies to reduce it. Earlier this year, for the first time in over two decades, the House of Representatives approved \$50 million in dedicated funding to research America's gun violence crisis. **The Senate has not allocated any similar funding.**

**Prevention of Domestic Gun Violence.** The US House of Representatives, with strong bipartisan support, passed the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2019 (HR 1585). This would continue federal funding for programs working to end domestic violence, including sexual assault, dating violence, and stalking. The legislation would also close the “boyfriend” and “stalker” loopholes that have allowed domestic abusers to obtain firearms. The Senate drafted, but has not yet voted on, its version of a reauthorization proposal (the Family Violence Prevention and Services Improvement Act of 2019, S 2259). The Senate version does NOT contain the important House provisions to restrict gun ownership for domestic abusers. **The Senate bill needs stronger protections for women.**

### **What Can You Do?**

**Learn.** Educate yourself and others on local, state and federal legislative proposals to end gun violence and promote gun safety. National and local organizations can keep you informed about such proposals and how you can show your support. They include:

- Brady United Against Gun Violence, *bradyunited.org*
- Everytown for Gun Safety, *everytown.org*
- Giffords, *giffords.org*
- March for Our Lives, *marchforourlives.com*
- Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, *mdpgv.org*
- Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, *momsdemandaction.org*
- Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, *rac.org*

**Advocate.** Call or write your Senators to urge their support for sensible gun legislation. If you are a Maryland resident, contact:

- Senator Ben Cardin, *cardin.senate.gov*, (202) 224-4524
- Senator Chris Van Hollen, *vanhollen.senate.gov*, (202) 224-4654

Contact information for U.S. Senators and Members of the House of Representatives, plus State and Local elected officials is at *usa.gov/elected-officials*.

Contact information for Maryland State and Local elected officials is also at *mdelect.net*.

If your elected officials already support sensible gun legislation, contact them to thank them and affirm that their support represents *your views as a constituent*.

**Vote.** Support local, state and national candidates who endorse legislation to prevent gun violence. Research candidates’ positions before you decide to support them. Share their positions with family, friends, and neighbors so they are also informed voters.

# **ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!**

## **The time to act is NOW!**

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*Sources for statistics:* Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Everytown; Giffords; Office of Senator Chris Van Hollen; Washington Post; and Washington Post-ABC News Poll of September 2019.