



KIDS IN THE CROSSFIRE

The courageous young survivors of the horrific school shooting in Parkland, Florida, have collectively raised their voices and declared that it is time for action—they're calling for gun safety laws proven to save lives from this uniquely American epidemic.

No child—in any community—should live in fear of a shooting at their school or in their community. No child should live with the memory of their classmates' deaths. There are simple steps we can take to protect our kids and our communities from gun violence.

Gun Violence Impacts Too Many Kids

Since 1998, nearly 200,000 minors have been shot—a staggering toll—and another 150,000 have experienced a shooting in their schools.¹ Among 14–17 year-olds, 17% have been exposed to gun violence.²

Shootings Cause Lasting Trauma

Children who survive shootings develop post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, and fearfulness, and can experience long-term decreases in academic achievement.³ One study found a 6% decrease in 9th-grade enrollment at schools that had experienced a deadly shooting.⁴

Violence Interferes with Education

Two-thirds of school districts now require schools to conduct active-shooter drills, with kids as young as two participating.⁵ These drills, and other costly security measures, can divert funds and time that are needed for education and create a culture of anxiety.⁶

KIDS AND FIREARMS KEY NUMBERS

17x

US children and teens are 17 times more likely to die from gun violence than their peers in other high-income countries.⁷

40%

Studies show at least 40% of children in high-violence urban areas have witnessed a shooting.⁸

60%

Nearly 60% of high schoolers report concerns about a potential mass shooting in their school or community.⁹

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“I woke up to the news that my best friend was gone. And I don’t understand why I can still go in a store and buy a weapon of war.”

–*Sam Zeif, Stoneman Douglas High survivor, 18*

“I just want something to change. This can’t keep happening with no change. It’s just so painful.”

–*Carly Novell, Stoneman Douglas High survivor, 17*

Four Ways to Protect Kids from Gun Violence

PREVENT ACCESS TO GUNS

Nearly 1.7 million American kids live in homes where guns are loaded and unlocked.¹⁰ Children find them and, tragically, use them in unintentional shootings, teen suicides, and school shootings. Enacting laws that require safe storage, punish adults who make it easy for children to access guns, and encourage the development of gun safety technology will save kids’ lives.

RAISE THE MINIMUM AGE

The shooters in Newtown and Parkland were too young to buy beer but old enough to purchase AR-15–style rifles. We should strengthen age requirements, beginning by prohibiting anyone under 21 from purchasing an assault weapon.

DISARM DANGEROUS PEOPLE

The Parkland shooter exhibited warning signs that he was armed and dangerous, even posting online that he wanted to become a school shooter. Extreme Risk Protection Order laws allow law enforcement and family members to petition a court to temporarily disarm people like him and other potentially violent individuals.

INVEST IN URBAN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND INTERVENTION PROGRAMS

For black families in America, the chance of a male child dying from a gunshot wound is 62% higher than dying in a motor vehicle crash.¹¹ Strategic intervention programs in urban communities plagued by gun violence have been able to cut gun homicide rates by as much as 50% in as little as two years.¹² States should fund and support these lifesaving programs.

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PROGRESS IS POSSIBLE

333

suicides by youths age 14–18 have been prevented in states with child access prevention laws.¹³

23%

Child access prevention laws are associated with a 23% decrease in unintentional child shooting deaths.¹⁴

210+

lifesaving gun safety laws have been enacted in 45 states and DC since the tragedy at Sandy Hook.

WE’RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

For nearly 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

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KIDS IN THE CROSSFIRE CITATIONS

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