

Advocate to End Gun Violence in Your Community

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only...” - James 1:22

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Photo: Lorie Schuall

Opportunities for Change

We are devastated and reeling from the shootings in El Paso and Dayton. This year there have been more mass shootings than days in 2019. The gun violence that plagues our country seems to have no end. Each time something like this happens we ask ourselves, what can we do? It is easy to become caught up in cynicism, especially when it feels and looks like your elected representatives aren't listening. Congress can no longer let us stew in the status quo. We will not resign ourselves to allowing this crisis to continue.

We are people of faith, called to put love into action, and that means not letting the status quo continue. Here are some actionable steps you can take to demand that Congress takes action to stop senseless gun violence.

Call your Senators right now:

In February, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019, which would require background checks for gun sales and transfers in the United States. Its companion bill S. 42 (Background Check Expansion Act) has lain dormant in the Senate, waiting for Majority Leader McConnell to call it up for consideration. Its passage could have a direct impact on curbing gun violence. Congress needs to hear from you that we will not sit by and allow gun violence to be a part of everyday America. Lend your voice by asking your Senator to support S.42.

Send a letter/write an email:

“As people of faith, the devastation we see created by gun violence is unacceptable. We are called to proclaim peace and we will not be content to let the current state of affairs continue. I ask you as a constituent, and a member of the faith community, to support the consideration and passage of S.42, the Background Check Expansion Act. This common sense legislation is the first of many steps to halt the spread of gun violence by requiring background checks on firearm sales. I ask you to be a voice of courage by standing up against gun violence and supporting S.42, the first of many steps to halt the spread of gun violence by requiring background checks on firearm sales. I ask you to be a voice of courage by standing up against gun violence and supporting this legislation.”

Background

The United Church of Christ has worked for more than 20 years to end the plague of gun violence in America – with our General Synod advocating for sensible, responsible gun policies and legislation in three resolutions passed in 1995, and urging the recognition of gun violence as a public health concern in need of scientific research by the CDC and NIH just last year.

More information on those resolutions, and worship and bible study resources can be found at ucc.org/gun-violence.



Take your advocacy to the next level:

Have an in-person meeting

Calls and emails are great - the greater the volume, the greater the attention legislators pay to the issue. But another great way to show your support or displeasure is to request an in-person meeting with your Member of Congress in one of their district offices or in Washington D.C. By taking the time to meet with a Member or their staff you are showing them how important the issue is to you. This is a chance for you to share story, ask how your Member specifically plans to move forward to keep our communities safe, and urge them to take action. After the meeting; be sure to follow up with them thanking them for their time and reiterating your request.

Write a letter to the Editor

A sharply written letter to the editor has a bigger impact than you might think. If you specifically mention your Member of Congress by name, their staff will bring the article to their attention. This is another great way to let your Member know what you think, and it can also inspire other people in your community to get involved.

Start by identifying yourself and your connection to the community. Express that, as a person of faith, speaking out against gun violence is one of the ways you live out Christ's commandment to love our neighbors. Then talk about why you care about this issue. This is your chance to talk about how gun violence has affected you and your community and why it is so important for Congress to take action.

Host a Postcard Party

Write Postcards to your member of congress asking them to support S.42 the Background Check Expansion Act and to take meaningful action to prevent gun violence. This can be something you do with friends or a youth group.

Hold a Bible Study about Gun Violence

The UCC has developed a bible study looking at faithful responses to curb gun violence in our communities called [Faith vs. Fear](#). This is a resource you or your church can use to enter into conversations about how as people of faith we are called to be a part of the effort to end gun violence.

Find this and other resource via ucc.org/gun-violence

