

# Gun violence is preventable if we take action.

*As parents and siblings, we are horrified by the mass shootings that have taken place in our country these past several weeks.*

*As clinicians dedicated to improving the health and longevity of all people, we call on our political leaders to take action! Easy, unfettered access to weapons of mass killing is a public health crisis. Common sense dictates background checks and gun safety training should be a universal requirement to purchase any firearm, and restoring the US ban on assault weapons is long overdue.*



*We implore our leaders to set aside party politics and act in the best interest of the health of all Americans.*

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To everyone who wants to support victims' families, you can donate on GoFundMe to the [Uvalde Texas Elementary School Shooting Relief](#) and [Buffalo Mass Shooting Relief](#) fundraisers. These fundraisers were verified by GoFundMe.

Assault weapons designed to kill many people in a short time have proliferated since the 1994 federal ban expired in 2004. Studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of this ban, which decreased fatalities due to mass shootings by [70 percent](#). US children — and their grieving families and friends — suffer disproportionately as a result of lax legislation. Among all high-income countries, [over 90% of all firearm deaths in 0-14 year olds](#) occur in the US. Black youth suffer a firearm [homicide rate over 14 times higher](#) than white youth. Already in 2022 [there have been](#) 17,348 gun violence deaths in the US, 14,400 injuries, 214 mass shootings, and 10 mass murders; a total of 657 children have been killed. In total, there were 455 incidents of defensive use compared to 580 incidents of unintentional shooting and 264 murder/suicide incidents.

In 2016, the American Medical Association (AMA) declared gun violence a [public health crisis](#); the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) recently asked the federal government to increase funding into research on gun violence prevention and “common-sense laws.” We strongly support implementation of systemic changes.

The data are clear. Countries that have successfully implemented safeguards on firearm purchase and use have seen gun deaths plummet. [Australia](#) and New Zealand, countries where gun ownership is as popular and as much a part of the culture as in the US, have successfully launched effective gun safety programs.

Given that there is bipartisan agreement among the US public, it is time for lawmakers to come to the table and pass effective legislation.

**We at Greater Boston PSR have compiled a list of actionable items to reduce the risk of gun violence in the USA:**

- Divest: if you have a pension plan or IRA, demand that it divest from investments in weapons manufacturers (see [As You Sow's tools](#)); and if you invest in the stock market, you can learn how to divest from such investments here: [Gun Free Funds- free action toolkit](#); and [Weapon Free Funds](#);
- Advocate for a permanent director at the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the chief regulator of gun sales and trafficking; [according to Doctors for America](#), this key agency has been without a permanent director since 2015;
- Ask your congressional representatives to refuse political donations from weapons manufacturers and to pass a ban on such donations to any legislator;
- Support state and federal legislation setting required standards for safe storage of firearms, including the [federal version of Ethan's Law](#) (H.R. 748);
- Discuss this issue with patients: the American College of Physicians has recommended that health professionals talk to patients about firearm safety.

This is a public health crisis, with public health solutions. The time to implement them is now.

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