

STUDENT ADVOCATE TOOLKIT



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CeaseFirePA TAKING A STAND

CeaseFirePA is a statewide organization working with mayors, police chiefs, faith leaders, community organizations, and individual Pennsylvanians to take a stand against gun violence. Through outreach, education, coalition building, and advocacy, we work to reduce gun violence and gun tragedies in our communities, stop the flow of illegal guns onto our streets, and keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them.

If you think you have the right to safety in your school and “Thoughts and Prayers” aren’t enough for you, we are here to help you advocate for yourself and bring about change and legislation that will keep you safe.

~~Thoughts
& Prayers~~

LEGISLATION AND CHANGE

TOOLKIT CONTENTS:

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- **How to be an Advocate**
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 - **Audience**
 - **Advocacy in Action**
- **Issues**
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AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Gun Violence in Schools

The shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School is one of nearly 300 school shootings in the US since 2013. The history of gun violence in schools dates back to at least 1966, with the five deadliest attacks detailed below:

Timeline

Aug. 1, 1966:
University of Texas,
Austin, Texas

A student and former Marine sharpshooter climbed to the top a tower on campus. He killed 14 people and wounded 31 more. Before the attack on campus, he killed his wife and mother.

April 20, 1999:
Columbine High
School, Littleton, Colo.

Two students killed 12 of their peers and a teacher. 21 other people were injured in the shooting

April 16, 2007:
Virginia Tech,
Blacksburg, Va.

A student killed 32 people and injured 17 others, at a residence hall and the Engineering, Science and Mechanics building.

Dec. 14, 2012:
Sandy Hook
Elementary School,
Newtown, Conn.

A 20 year old man killed his mother before going to the school where he killed 20 first-graders and six staff members.

Feb. 14, 2017:
Marjory Stoneman
Douglas High School,
Parkland, Fla.

A former student entered the school, acitivated a fire alarm, opened fire, and killed 17 students and injured 16 others both inside and outside the school.

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Gun Violence in Schools

After mass shootings, some elected officials offer only their “Thoughts and Prayers” to those affected by the violence.

While they offer their thoughts and prayers, gun violence continues, here are the figures.

Fast Facts

- **Since Columbine**, there have been 270 shootings of any kind at a school
 - There have been 25 fatal active school shootings at elementary and high schools
 - 141 people have been killed in a mass murder or attempted mass murder at a school
 - There have been 50 mass murders or attempted mass murders at a school
 - 17 kids age 15 or younger have committed or attempted a mass school shooting
- **Since Sandy Hook**, more than 400 people have been shot in school shootings
- **In the 2015-2016 school year**, there were at least 269 incidents in which elementary, middle, and high school students were caught with guns on school grounds
- Of shootings perpetrated by minors at primary and secondary schools and for which the source of the firearm was known, more than half of the kids obtained the gun at home — likely because an adult did not store it locked and unloaded
- A nationwide study of mass shootings from 2009 to 2016 revealed that in least 42 percent of those incidents, there is documentation that the attacker exhibited dangerous warning signs before the shooting.

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How to be an Advocate

In the aftermath of a deadly shooting, it can be difficult to find your place in the fight to prevent future bloodshed. Political change requires a ton of hard work and persistence, but there are you have to start anywhere. Here are a few places to make your mark.

Solutions

- Elected Officials are the key to any legislative action on gun violence prevention and they answer to you
- Ways to reach out to your elected official include
 - Writing Letters
 - Making Phone Calls
 - Sending Emails
- Consult the “Do’s and Don’ts of Calling Legislators” resource on CeaseFirePA.org for more information
- You can also effect change by volunteering at organization like CeaseFirePa, sparking conversations about Gun Violence Prevention, writing letters to the editor, and so much more.
 - For more info on writing letters to the editor, consult the “Do’s and Don’ts of Calling Legislators” resource on CeaseFirePA.org
 - For more information, contact CeaseFirePA

Find your Rep in Congress

To find your Representative in the US House, visit www.house.gov and provide your zip code

Find your Senator

To find your US Senator, visit www.senate.gov. For PA, our senators are Bob Casey and Pat Toomey.

Find your State Rep

To find your representative in the State House, visit <http://www.legis.state.pa.us> and provide your address

Find your State Senator

To find your representative in the State Senate, visit <http://www.legis.state.pa.us> and provide your address.

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How to be an Advocate: Know your Message

- **Be Respectful**
- **You have the right to express your opinions**
- **You're making the case for change, speak from the heart but know your facts**
- **Tell your story**
- **People don't want to hear the same statistics over and over- just use a few key figures.**
- **Have a call to action or a solution...**
 - **A Letter to the editor**
 - **A School Walkout**
- **Advocacy is a marathon, not a sprint**

Knowing your message... Key Issues

- Expanding Background Checks to All Gun Sales in Pennsylvania
- Requiring Reporting of Lost or Stolen Guns
- Keeping Guns Out of Our Schools and off Our College Campuses
- Protecting Cities That are Trying to Keep Their Community Safe

Knowing your message... Laws in PA

-  No waiting period to purchase firearms
-  No Training required before purchasing a firearm
-  No Background Check required before purchasing a long gun during a private sale
-  No restriction on the purchase of ammunition
-  No law requiring someone to report a lost or stolen firearm

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How to be an Advocate

You know what you want to talk about, and you know how to go about saying it- but you also need to make sure you're saying it to the right people.

Depending on the issue at stake, you are better off talking to certain elected officials rather than others. It's also important to know the perspective of your audience and speak to their concerns.

Know Your Audience

- **For State Issues**, like those discussed on pages 8 and 9, you need to talk to your State Elected Officials.
- **For Federal Issues**, be sure to get in touch with your member of Congress or Senator depending on the piece of legislation.
- **For Local Issues**, consult your local elected officials.
 - For more information on getting in touch with your state and national elected officials, see page 4. For local officials, contact your municipality.
- **When writing to an elected official or writing a letter to the editor**, make sure you know the concerns of the constituency. Be prepared and speak accordingly.
 - This doesn't mean you should say two opposite things to different people, it means you should know your audience.
- Always be respectful and avoid getting frustrated.
- **Your elected officials answer to you, hold them accountable.**

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Advocacy in Action: Dr William Begg



At the time of the Newtown Shooting, Dr. William Begg was the EMS director for Danbury Hospital, the hospital that processed victims of the shooting.

Since the shooting he has been a tireless advocate for safer gun laws, specifically Universal Background Checks. He has marched on Washington and testified before the Connecticut legislature and the US Senate.

Advocacy in Action: March For Our Lives

After the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, students from the school and across the nation have advocated for better legislation to keep them safe in their schools.

This includes planning a national school walkout, and organizing the national “March For Our Lives” in Washington DC. As many as 500,000 people are expected to attend the rally, demanding legislation to keep our students safe from gun violence. The march has sparked countless other marches and protests throughout the country.

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Issues in Gun Violence

Website for PA
House and Senate:
[http://www.legis.
state.pa.us](http://www.legis.state.pa.us)

In Pennsylvania and accross the nation, there is an overwleming amount of pending legislation. Here is the legislation in Pennsylvania that CeaseFirePA supports and keeps out state safe.

Bills to Support

- **HB1400- Requiring a background check for the private sale of long guns (PA House Version)**
- **SB209- Requiring a background check for the private sale of long guns (PA Senate Version)**
- **SB501- Shortening amount of time that an individual with a Protection from Abuse order has to surrender their firearms**
- **HB1872- Ban on Bump Stocks (PA House Verison)**
- **SB969- Ban on Bump Stocks (PA Senate Version)**
- **HB2109- A red flag/Gun violence restraining order/Extreme Risk protection order**
 - **Red Flag Laws allow law enforcement to temporarily seize guns from people deemed a danger to themselves or others, acting on tips from family or close acquaintances.**

A co-sponsorship memo for a piece of legislation that would limit the capacity of magazines for sale has been introduced. However, the actual bill has not yet been introduced.

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In Pennsylvania and across the nation, there is an overwhelming amount of pending legislation.

Here is the legislation in Pennsylvania that CeaseFirePA opposes because it endangers Pennsylvanians

Bills to Oppose

- **HB671-Granting legal standing to membership organizations to sue municipalities that enact their own firearm laws, and recoup costs. Previously referred to as ACT 192, which was deemed unconstitutional by the PA Supreme Court due to the manner it was passed (it violated the single subject rule) (State House Version)**
- **SB5- State Senate Version of HB671**
- **HB870- Granting school boards the ability to allow non security school personnel with conceal carry licenses and “training” the authority to carry their firearms in schools (House version)**
- **SB383- State Senate Version of HB870**
- **HB763- Elimination of the Pennsylvania Instant Check System or PICS (House Version)**
- **SB224- State Senate Version of HB763**
 - **Elimination of PICS would switch Pennsylvania to the less comprehensive, and less safe, National Instant Check System NICS**
- **HB38- Classifying gun owners as a protected class**
- **HB167- Expansion of the “Stand your ground” law.**