POSITION STATEMENTS FROM MOMS DEMAND ACTION FOR GUN SENSE IN AMERICA

I. Background Checks on Every Gun Sale

Criminal background checks are the foundation for any effort to reduce gun violence across America. The system works - more than 3.5 million illegal gun sales have been blocked in the last 20 years. But ½ of all Americans still live in states where a convicted felon, domestic abuser, or fugitive can skip a background check by finding an unlicensed seller at a gun show or online. Lawmakers need to close this dangerous loophole and further strengthen the system by ensuring all background checks are completed before guns are sold. They should also empower law enforcement to pursue people who illegally try and fail to purchase illegal guns.

In South Carolina background checks are not required for sales be unlicensed sellers. In 2018 there were 54,765 posts online (Armslist.com) or for gun shows for firearms where no background check was needed.

II. PROTECT KIDS AND OUR COMMUNITIES

1. Pass redflag laws and institute ERPO’s (extreme risk protection orders). An Everytown original analysis of mass shootings from 2009 to 2017 revealed that in 51% of incidents the shooter exhibited warning signs that they posed a risk to themselves or others before the shooting. These warning signs are even more apparent among perpetrators of school violence and they are also apparent in cases of suicide, domestic violence, and other forms of gun violence. Red flag laws would allow individuals (family, peers, etc.) to identify someone exhibiting such warning signs so that law enforcement could intervene before tragedy happens.
2. Create better school safety. We need meaningful action to keep our schools safe - action that addresses what we know about gun violence in America’s schools and prevents it from occurring in the first place. It’s time for our leaders to adopt a multi faceted approach that provides the school community with the tools it needs to intervene and prevent school-based gun violence. We can’t let risky ideas, like arming teachers, dominate the debate. Put simply, an armed teacher cannot, in a moment of extreme duress and confusion, transform into a specially trained law enforcement officer. In reality, an armed teacher is much more likely to hit a student bystander or be shot by law enforcement than to be an effective solution to an active shooter in a school.

We must focus on approaches that are proven effective, such as addressing students’ health, empowering teachers and law enforcement to intervene when students show signs they could be a danger to themselves or others, improving our schools physical security, and keeping guns out of the hands of people who shouldn’t have them in the first place.

1. Promote responsible gun storage and continue the BeSmart for Kids Program
2. Enact better Domestic Violence legislation. Every month an average of 52 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. Nearly 1 million women alive today have reported being shot or shot at by intimate partners, and 4.5 million women have reported being threatened with a gun. In more than half of mass shootings over the past decade, the perpetrator shot a current or former intimate partner or family member as part of the rampage. The ripple effects of firearms in the hands of an abuser extend far beyond the intimate relationship - affecting children who witness or live with it and the family members, coworkers, and law enforcement officers who respond to it. (See the list of federal and state policies and practices that disrupt abusers’ access to guns and save lives - one page short position list).

III. COMBAT DAILY GUN VIOLENCE BY ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE TOLL OF GUN VIOLENCE AFFECTS UNDERFUNDED AREAS OF OUR COMMUNITIES MOST HEAVILY.

Legislators and law enforcement need the resources provided by funded research to diagnose problems and create evidence based solutions. Despite this uniquely American epidemic, Congress has knowingly restricted gun violence research and, as a result, lives are put at risk every day. In 1966, Congress approved a budget restriction, known as the Dickey Amendment, that dramatically curtailed the ability of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct firearms research. This restriction prevented the agency from spending funds to “advocate or promote gun control” and effectively zeroed out the $2.6 million the CDC had previously used for firearms research. Both the CDC and NIH budget restrictions were deliberate efforts by the gun lobby to suppress gun research. (NB This situation may have improved at this time).

IV. HOLD THE GUN INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABLE

Prosecute the gun industry for not creating safer guns and for marketing weapons and hardware that have no place in the hands of civilians. Assault weapons and high-capacity magazines are commonplace in mass shootings and make shootings more lethal. Research shows that restrictions on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines can help prevent mass shooting injuries and fatalities as well as reduce the devastation of daily gun violence in America.