

Appealing to Vermont Elected Officials to End Gun Violence

SPONSOR: The Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Barre

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RESOLVED, That the 190th Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont send the following letter to Governor Phil Scott, Senator Bernard Sanders, Senator Peter Welch, and Representative Rebecca Balint regarding the safety of our children who face continued gun violence throughout our country:

Dear Governor Scott, Senator Sanders, Senator Welch, & Representative Balint:

The 190th Annual Convention of the Episcopal Diocese of Vermont, concerned for the safety of children throughout our country who face continued gun violence, implores each of you to take action on local and federal levels to address this ongoing travesty. At the very least, we ask you to start by **Banning Assault Weapons, Passing the 2023 Background Check Expansion Act, and Increasing Funding for Mental Health Care.**

We cannot sit back and watch our schools and communities become victimized over and over. Our children are afraid to go to school. They have nightmares and great anxiety and are unable to make sense of the tragedy that is happening in schools and communities. They are traumatized by Active Shooter Drills and wonder when tragedy will come to their school. Learning clearly gets lost in the midst of all of this trauma. Continued weapon abuse fuels more anger, anxiety, self-destructive behavior, mistrust, and aggressive acting out – all a vicious cycle.

We have been watching this moral deterioration for 24 years since the first-school shooting took place at Columbine in Colorado. Through our churches, we are educating to “See something, Say something.” We also address proper gun education and storage. We provide services to assist those experiencing fear and grief in response to the tragedies. We support GunSense Resources. We work side-by-side to support our police. But we need **Legislative Messaging that these senseless Massacres must STOP.**

Please hear our URGENT request. It is imperative for the well-being of our children and the health and stability of our country overall.

EXPLANATION

The congregation of the Church of the Good Shepherd, Barre and other Barre congregations as well have sent this letter to our Vermont Elected Officials. The Vestry of the Church of the Good Shepherd now urges our Diocesan Convention to consider sending this letter. We have prayed to end gun violence, we have gathered in vigils to mourn the victims of gun violence and now we are called to act by addressing our Elected Representatives to take up this cause. We do this prayerfully and with hope that these simple measures can save lives.