

# Faith in Action: June 5, 2022 – Ending Gun Violence

Every week at All Saints Church we put our faith into action. This week our focus is the scourge of gun violence gripping our country. We invite you to sign two letters. One to your members of Congress and another to your California State Senator.

The school shooting in Uvalde, TX that claimed the lives of 21 people, 19 of them children was not the only mass shooting to occur in the last week of May. The threshold for mass shootings as defined by the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit research organization, defines a mass shooting as one in which “four or more people are shot or killed, not including the shooter.” By that definition, **at least fifteen mass shootings occurred between the Uvalde, TX shooting and the end of May.** These occurred across the country, with one in California. Twelve of those shootings occurred over the Memorial Day weekend. This is according to an article in the Washington Post. Shootings have become so frequent that most of these received little or no national news coverage. Apparently deaths have to reach double digits in order to merit national attention.

**The letter to Congress tells our members that it is long past time for the federal government to act.** Congress must pass comprehensive legislation to restrict the ownership of firearms, require background checks for all gun purchases, eliminate background check loopholes, tighten laws against gun trafficking, require gun safety training, fund gun violence prevention programs, and address gun violence as a public health crisis. It reminds them that every day in this country, human beings die from preventable firearms deaths. And that **while our minds rightly concentrate on this issue when mass shootings occur, and especially when the victims of a mass shooting are children, the sad reality is that shooting injuries and deaths are far more common than all-too-frequent mass shootings.** In addition to those terrorized by mass shootings, we cannot forget the countless communities with high rates of everyday gun violence and lament the reality that this type of violence disproportionately impacts communities of color. We must never forget the victims of racist acts of violence: the souls taken at the Tops grocery store in Buffalo, the Korean Presbyterian Church in Southern California, the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, and Mother Emanuel AME Church in Charleston. We acknowledge and bewail the harm caused by

intimate partner and family violence, and the lives lost to suicide and firearm accidents. We demand that Congress enact commonsense gun reform now!

**The letter to our State Senators thanks them for the fact that California has passed some of the strongest gun legislation in the country.** Unfortunately, the United States is a country with some of the loosest gun regulations in the world and this weakens the effectiveness of California's gun laws. Never-the-less, **according to the CDC, California's rate of 8.5 gun deaths per 100,000 people puts us well below the national average and among the bottom ten states for firearm mortality.** We are marginally safer from guns in California compared to the rest of the country. Gun control legislation works.

**However, there is more we can do. Canada's firearm mortality rate is one-quarter the rate in California and Japan's is one-tenth the rate of Canada.** Therefore, we urge our State Senators to support the following two bills that have passed the Assembly and are now in the Senate:

- AB 452 would require a school district, county office of education, and charter school to inform parents and guardians of pupils at the beginning of each semester or quarter of the regular school term of California's child access prevention laws and laws relating to the safe storage of firearms. This would enhance security in our schools
- AB 1621 would redefine a firearm precursor part as a firearm if it could be readily completed, assembled or converted into a firearm or sold to the public to become or be used to complete a firearm. The bill would also require any person in possession of an unserialized firearm to apply to the department for a unique mark of identification and to affix that mark to the firearm before July 1, 2023. The bill would explicitly prohibit the possession or transfer of a firearm without a serial number or mark of identification. This would strengthen the identification of guns.

**All of us are victims of the gun violence raging in the United States. Even if we have not been victims of a shooting, the threat of gun violence is ever present in our minds affecting our behavior in ways that we probably don't consciously realize. Please take action against gun violence and sign the letters to our representatives.**