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Press Release

Americans Against Gun Violence Responds to Mass Shooting at Minneapolis Catholic Church School

Sacramento, California, August 28, 2025: We at Americans Against Gun Violence are appalled by the mass shooting at the Annunciation Catholic Church in Minneapolis yesterday in which two students, ages 8 and 12, were killed, and 14 other students and three adults were wounded. We grieve for the victims, for their families, for the victims' classmates and adult members of the church congregation, for the people of Minneapolis, and for our entire country.

The United States of America is the only country in the world in which school shootings occur on a regular basis. During a 10-year period in which there were 288 shootings on U.S. college or school campuses, there were two school shootings in Canada, two in France, one in Germany, and none in other high income democratic countries.¹ It is long past time that we as a country should stop pretending that we don't know how to prevent these shootings. More than half a century ago, in June of 1968, the late Senator Thomas Dodd of Connecticut stated in a press release and a speech on the floor of the U.S. Senate:

Pious condolences will no longer suffice....Quarter measures and half measures will no longer suffice....The time has now come that we must adopt stringent gun control legislation comparable to the legislation in force in virtually every civilized country in the world.²

We as a country know – or should know – that in order to prevent not only school shootings, but also the vast majority of other forms of gun violence that take the lives of more than 100 people on an average day in our country,³ we should follow the examples of other countries and take the following steps:

- Completely ban civilian ownership of handguns, as Britain did after the 1996 Dunblane Primary School massacre⁴
- Completely ban civilian ownership of all automatic and semi-automatic long guns, as Britain,⁵ Australia,⁶ and New Zealand⁷ all did after mass shootings committed with these kinds of weapons
- Place the burden of proof on anyone seeking to acquire other types of firearms to show that he or she has a legitimate need for one and can handle one safely⁸ (including disallowing “self defense” as a legitimate reason for acquiring a gun, given the overwhelming evidence that there’s no net protective value in civilian gun ownership in a civil society)⁹
- Require intensive background checks for all gun purchases¹⁰
- Require licensing of all firearm owners and registration of all firearms¹¹

We, as a country, should also know that prior to the Supreme Court's rogue 2008 *Heller* decision, there was no constitutional obstacle to the adoption of the above gun control measures. In the *Heller* decision, a narrow 5-4 majority of justices ruled for the first time in U.S. history that the Second Amendment confers an individual right to own a gun unrelated to service in the "well regulated militia" described in the first half of the Amendment. The five justices in the *Heller* majority endorsed an interpretation of the Second Amendment that the late Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger had called "one of the greatest pieces of fraud – I repeat the word, 'fraud' – on the American public by special interest groups" that he had ever seen in his lifetime. More than 300 other Supreme Court decisions have been overturned, and there's no reason why the *Heller* decision and its progeny cannot be overturned as well.

Some people claim that the United States will never adopt stringent gun control laws comparable to the laws in high income democratic countries in which school shootings occur rarely, if ever. To make such a claim is the equivalent of stating that the United States will always be a country that loves its guns more than its children. We at Americans Against Gun Violence reject this nihilistic attitude. We believe that we have not only the ability, but also the moral responsibility to take the definitive measures described above in order to protect our children from the threat of wanton gun violence.

References

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² Thomas Dodd, "Text of Speech by Senator Thomas Dodd on Floor of U.S. Senate: The Sickness of Violence and the Need for Gun Control Legislation," Office of Senator Thomas Dodd, June 11, 1968, http://thedoddcenter.uconn.edu/asc/research/gun_control.htm#; Thomas Dodd, "Press Release: Pious Condolences Will No Longer Suffice," Office of Senator Thomas Dodd, June 10, 1968, http://thedoddcenter.uconn.edu/asc/research/gun_control.htm#.

³ "Fatal Injury Data | WISQARS | Injury Center | CDC," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, accessed July 1, 2025, <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>.

⁴ Michael J. North, "Gun Control in Great Britain after the Dunblane Shootings," in *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

⁵ North, "Gun Control in Great Britain after the Dunblane Shootings."

⁶ Philip Alpers, "The Big Melt: How One Democracy Changed after Scrapping a Third of Its Firearms," in *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013); Rebecca Peters, "Rational Firearm Regulation: Evidence-Based Gun Laws in Australia," in *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis* (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013).

⁷ Josh Hafner, "Gun Control Bill in New Zealand Passes in Early Vote Following Attacks," USA Today, April 2, 2019, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2019/04/02/gun-control-bill-new-zealand-vote-parliament-mosque-attacks/3341240002/>; "2019 Firearm Law Changes (Arms Amendment Bill 2)," New Zealand Police, accessed August 27, 2020, <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/firearms-and-safety/2019-firearm-law-changes-arms-amendment-bill-2>.

⁸ “Key Components of Federal Gun Control Laws in the United States and Five Other High Income Democratic Countries: Australia, Canada, Great Britain, Japan, and New Zealand,” Americans Against Gun Violence, 2024, <https://aagunv.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Key-Components-of-gun-control-laws.pdf>.

⁹ William Durston, “Should Law-Abiding People Own Guns for Self Protection,” Americans Against Gun Violence: Facts and FAQ’s, June 1, 2019, <https://aagunv.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/FAQ-guns-for-protection.pdf>.

¹⁰ “Key Components of Federal Gun Control Laws in the United States and Five Other High Income Democratic Countries.”

¹¹ “Key Components of Federal Gun Control Laws in the United States and Five Other High Income Democratic Countries.”