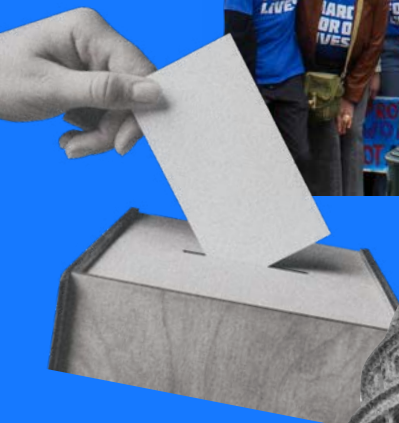




**DEMAND  
ACTION**



# IT ENDS WITH US

A Plan to Reimagine Safety and  
End Gun Violence

**MARCH  
FOR OUR  
LIVES**

**TAKE  
ACTION**



## **WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO END GUN VIOLENCE AND CREATE SAFE, HEALTHY, AND THRIVING COMMUNITIES?**

Every day in America, more than 120 people are killed by guns. The deadly epidemic of gun violence permeates every corner of American life and for the last three years in a row, guns have been the leading cause of death for young people in America – far outpacing cancer and car accidents as of 2020. Whether at home, school, the movie theater, the bowling alley, our graduations, or at our places of worship, everywhere we look gun violence is decimating our families and communities, and is a defining feature of life for an entire generation of young people.

This is our plan to end this scourge. March For Our Lives was founded to say, “No more.” No more burying loved ones. No more American exceptionalism in all the wrong ways. This plan is a roadmap to build a world that turns the status quo on its head.

Learning from activists, civil rights leaders, and so many others who came before us, we developed our framework for change, the first of which was released in 2021 and we’ve continued to update it since. As we’ve updated our policy plan, we’ve been heartened by the tremendous progress the movement has made—each victory notched, small or large, part of a building tide against the status quo. Having made tremendous progress since we were founded in 2018, this policy plan is an update on our vision to build a world free of gun violence.

Our policy agenda is rooted in what young people in our country tell us they need to be safe. It is grounded in the perspectives of survivors of gun violence and their families. It is bolstered by robust policy analysis and conversations with various stakeholders. And it is preventative, not reactive – proposing solutions that address gun violence long before someone picks up a gun.

This policy agenda is a significant update from our previous one, largely because we've learned a lot as a movement. As more data becomes available about policies that work, strategies like community violence intervention take on a new texture in this agenda. As new threats crop up, we are lifting up new solutions to stem the flow of firearms, like a proposal to limit “buy now, pay later” marketing schemes that open the door to quick, easy, and dangerous access to firearms.

And, of course, we needed to update this agenda because March For Our Lives has helped usher in a new era in gun safety legislation, and we've happily seen several of our previous policy proposals be adopted by President Biden, Congress, and state legislatures. This progress, including a proliferation of Offices of Gun Violence Prevention in the White House and at the state level, expanded funding for community violence intervention, and tightening of loopholes and background checks, is our top priority to defend—and to build upon.

This agenda begins with our philosophy, guided by data, on what drives gun violence—the “Five Forces” that fuel violence in our communities. Then, through three sections, we address the highest impact policy solutions to address gun violence at those roots, through strategies that address access, intervention and prevention, and structural solutions. While we propose a myriad of policies, these are the guiding principals that we know from a growing body of research have the highest impact on reducing gun deaths and injuries. This agenda doesn't tinker at the edges, it goes right to the heart of the problem with solutions that would significantly reduce gun deaths quickly.

This is our proposal to end the deadliest epidemic facing our nation's children to take back our futures and our lives from the twisted lies of the gun industry, and to invest in a safer, more just future where all young people can live and thrive.





# THE FIVE FORCES THAT FUEL GUN VIOLENCE

Our approach to ending gun violence heavily emphasizes firearm access, which we know is the number one predictor of gun violence in any community—the ease with which one has access to lethal means. But even before that, our approach begins with what we call “The Five Forces,” the root causes underpinning the reasons anyone would turn to violence. Tackling these issues addresses the broader societal issues that invite violence in the first place: **gun glorification, armed supremacy, political apathy and corruption, poverty, and the national mental health crisis.**

**Gun glorification** is the belief embedded in our culture that power and safety are derived from guns. In this country, we put guns on a pedestal and prioritize access to firearms over access to human needs. This is the lie sold to us by the gun industry that makes guns extremely easy to access—easier than housing or medical care.

**Armed supremacy** is the use of guns and the threat of gun violence to reinforce power structures, hierarchies, and status. It is how individuals or groups reinforce their perceived value relative to those with less power. It is how white supremacy and patriarchy survive.

**Political apathy and corruption** gradually destroys the democratic principle that power comes from the people. It happens when politics fails to change lived outcomes for those it’s meant to serve. Politicians use voters to gain power for themselves, but the voters get little in return. People become apathetic because they are not valued or empowered.

**Poverty** is the state of not having enough material possessions, income, or resources to meet basic human needs. The communities facing the highest rates of everyday gun violence have been intentionally impoverished—systemically denied resources and opportunities by the state for generations.

**The national mental health crisis.** While we fight to end gun violence, there is another mass-scale public health emergency happening simultaneously. 1 in 5 American adults experience mental illness, and millions of Americans are struggling with undiagnosed and untreated mental illness and lack of access to mental health support and care. People with mental illness are often mischaracterized as being a threat to others when, in fact, they are at higher risk of becoming a victim of gun violence themselves, including suicide. We refuse this scapegoating.

Violence is a complex and layered issue, but it is undeniable that a majority of violence in the United States stems from poverty, marginalization, exclusion, and glorification of guns in our culture. It is amplified by the societal belief, fueled by lies and marketing schemes, that a gun can solve our problems. Each of these forces is rooted in oppression. To create a society where every person is supported and able to thrive, we must understand how these forces operate and then work to dismantle them.

As the largest youth movement in the nation fighting to end the epidemic of gun violence, we believe a new reality is possible—one where we are free from gun violence in all forms. At MFOL, we know this is a profoundly intersectional issue, inextricably bound to our long journey for racial justice.

## **OUR METHODOLOGY**

Our original “It Ends With Us” policy plan was created in 2021 to establish our policy priorities. Since then, as new data has come out—and as we’ve secured more and more policy victories—we have updated our plan to finetune our proposals for comprehensively addressing gun violence.

Our approach to developing a grassroots-anchored update of this policy agenda comprised three main steps:

- 1) initial assessment, including a policy landscape analysis;
- 2) a comprehensive stakeholder engagement process, and
- 3) synthesis, which allowed us to integrate ideas and prioritize our policy goals.

This updated agenda resulted from conversations with key stakeholders, young people, and the March For Our Lives staff. Through comprehensive research and analysis, we aimed to create policy priorities that reflect the diversity and richness of our movement and adjacent networks and movements. This plan acknowledges the current state of our politics while pushing the movement forward by making bold demands of our leaders while centering young people and communities of color that are most impacted by gun violence.

**Our mission calls for something bolder and more transformative than gun safety alone. We call for a world re-imagined: a world where oppressive power structures are abandoned, community is embraced—a world where all human needs are met, and the love of people is centered.**

# OUR ROAD MAP

Our policy solutions are centered on our five forces and defined below into three categories:

## 1. Address firearm access and regulation and implement violence intervention and prevention policies.

To address the gun violence crisis in our country, we need to address **access** by raising the bar for responsible gun ownership and purchasing in America while also holding the gun industry accountable for its role in fueling violence. In tandem, we must invest in **prevention**, like community violence intervention (CVI), that holistically prevent gun violence.

## 2. Build a democracy for all.

If we're going to solve the American gun violence epidemic, then we need to fight for a functioning and just democracy. This includes removing barriers to civic participation for young people, reforming our courts to better reflect the democratic process and ideals our country was founded on, defending the constitution and gun safety laws, and electing candidates who are gun violence prevention champions.

## 3. Create safe and healthy communities by reimagining public safety, addressing social and economic inequities and tackling state-sanctioned violence.

We want to take a proactive and sustainable approach to ending gun violence in our country. To do so, we need to address the root causes of the epidemic. That includes addressing social and economic inequities that directly contribute to increased gun violence and investing in public education and affordable, accessible healthcare.

Ending gun violence also looks like reimagining public safety. We know that the safest communities aren't the most policed; they're the richest in resources and opportunity. That means fighting for ongoing investments in the neighborhoods and places that have historically been disinvested in and left behind. Additionally, to adequately address gun violence in America, we must also confront the way that law enforcement too often brutally targets communities of color with not only firearms and physical violence but also the violence of carceral solutions—opting to incarcerate rather than care for people. This disproportionately affects Black people and contributes to gun deaths and injuries. Instead, we call on replacing carceral solutions with new, holistic forms of public safety that work for everyone – not just a select few.





## SECTION ONE

# **Address firearm regulation and access and implement violence intervention and prevention policies**

Countless studies have revealed that the most effective way to save lives is to ensure that firearms don't fall into the hands of people who would hurt or kill themselves or others. That means common sense laws like; universal background checks to limit access; permitting requirements that ensure safe training for would-be owners; safe storage regulations to ensure children can't access firearms by accident; and banning ghost guns that circumvent legal protections. These are relatively low bars to clear that ensure safe, responsible gun ownership. Importantly, they work to prevent gun violence long before it occurs—preventing deadly accidents and ensuring that folks who might harm themselves or others don't have access to lethal means.

Further upstream, we are strongly in favor of strategies that address violence long before it occurs and interrupt cycles of violence that harm not only those shot by a gun but also those pulling the trigger. The decision to turn to a firearm is, in many ways, an indication that our social system is failing. We advocate solutions like community violence prevention programs that interrupt potential pathways toward violence and open new pathways toward health and wellness.

Addressing access and violence interruption strategies are the most effective, data-driven policy solutions to curtail violence, and states and localities with robust programs that use upstream approaches—rather than carceral solutions like flooding communities with police officers—see long-term, sustainable safety and dramatically lower rates of violence than states and localities without these solutions. We advocate for this comprehensive approach through the following solutions:

### **Universal Background Checks**

At present, roughly [40% of gun sales](#) are conducted without a background check. Broad loopholes allow for firearms to be traded almost without limit, if one really wants firearms that badly. For obvious reasons, that has deadly consequences. For instance, [1 in 9](#) people trying to purchase a firearm through an online gun marketplace are people who cannot legally have firearms—including people who might be underage, or a risk to themselves or others. Where states that have implemented background checks for all firearm sales they've seen as much as a [10% decrease](#) in homicide rates. Universal background checks would mandate checks before all firearm sales, ensuring that a check takes place before purchases at licensed gun dealers, between private individuals, sales conducted online, at gun shows, and other means. The background check process would also involve a waiting period before releasing the firearm to its new owner.

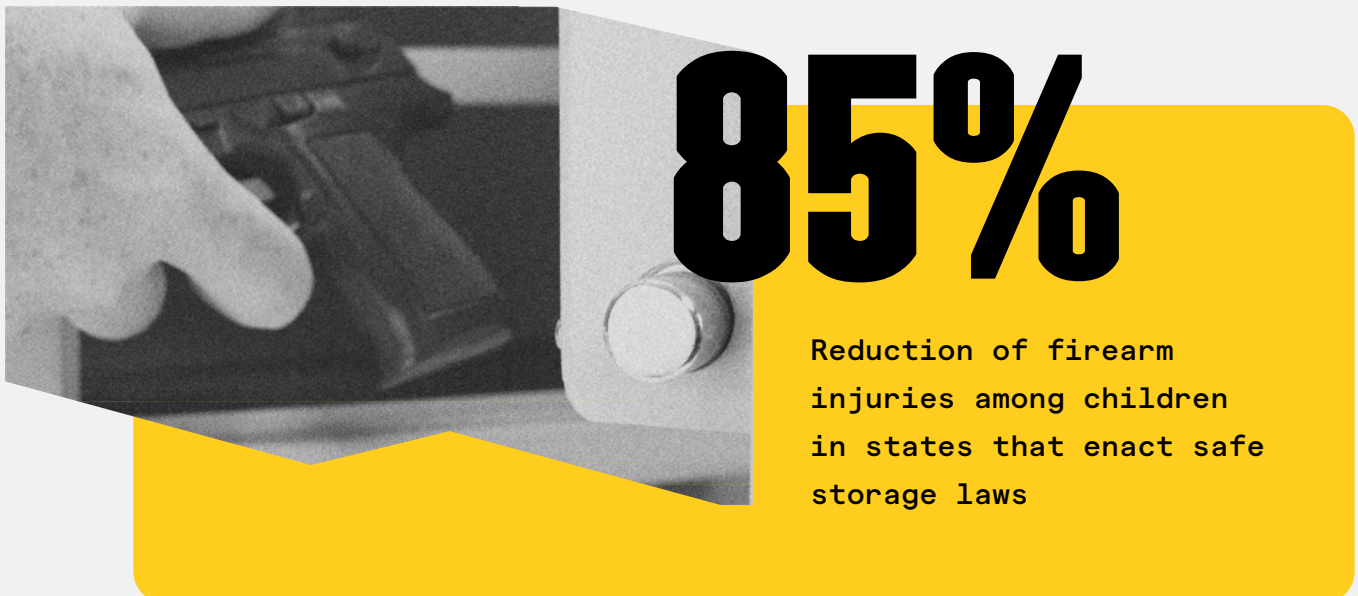
### **Ban Assault Weapons and High-Capacity Magazines**

It's simple: Weapons of war that enable more casualties during mass shootings should not be allowed on our streets and in our communities. Dozens of mass shootings have been committed with assault weapons, including shootings in Uvalde, Boulder, Orlando, Parkland, Las Vegas, Aurora, Sandy Hook, San Bernardino, Midland/Odessa, Poway Synagogue, Sutherland Springs, and Tree of Life Synagogue. We've done this before, it's time to bring back the assault weapons ban.



## Safe Storage of Firearms and Child Access Prevention Laws

A crucial part of addressing gun violence among young people is ensuring the safe storage of firearms. Safe storage disrupts hazardous access to the firearm. We need to mandate the safe storage of firearms, including implementing national standards for locking devices on guns and ensuring children and youth are unable to access firearms in their homes. We also need to implement Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws, which hold parents and adults accountable if their children gain access to their firearms. Safe storage legislation requires gun owners to safely lock and store their firearms, while child access prevention laws require firearms to be stored and secured by adults in a place where children cannot access them. Safe storage has shown a reduction in gun deaths, including unintentional shootings and suicides. Additionally, research has also shown that most school shooters get their firearms from the home. In states where child access prevention laws have been implemented, the rate of accidental injuries from children accessing a firearm has decreased by 85%. Both safe storage and child access prevention laws work together to reduce youth gun violence across the country.



## Ban Unserialized Firearms (aka “ghost guns”)

Ghost guns are a dangerous avenue to causing mass harm. They are firearms made at home from parts that can easily be ordered online and are nearly impossible to trace as they circumvent federal law and do not have serial numbers. Over [37,000 ghost guns](#) have been recovered since 2017, and in 2022 alone, the Department of Justice recovered [27,000 ghost guns](#). There must be a ban on ghost guns and the kits to make them.

### Permit to Purchase a Firearm (aka “firearm license”)

To drive a car and get a license, you have to pass a test and go through multiple hours of Driver’s Ed. Why should owning a gun be any different? Individuals should be required to obtain a license to possess firearms and ammunition. Getting this license would include passing a background check, taking a mandatory safety course on storing firearms securely and operating them safely, and completing a firearm safety test every five years. Any sort of licensing database and consequent enforcement mechanisms should be built with special attention toward equity and in consultation with communities historically targeted by the racist and anti-Black mechanisms that pervade regulatory and criminal legal systems.



# 23x

Shootings involving assault weapons injure [23 times](#) more people than those without.

### Raise the Age to Purchase a Firearm to 21

Firearms are the leading cause of death for young people, not alcohol or tobacco. Yet alcohol and tobacco products are restricted from individuals under the age of 21. Raising the age to purchase a firearm to 21 has resulted in a [9% decline](#) in suicides among ages 18-20. Additionally, [six of the deadliest mass shootings](#) since 2018 were committed by individuals 21 and under. Creating a higher standard for gun ownership includes raising the minimum age for gun possession to 21.

## **Expand Prohibitions on Who Can Acquire and Possess Firearms**

Those who are a danger to themselves or others should not be able to have a firearm. We want to expand prohibited categories for obtaining guns, with a focus on those with a history of violence. This would include the following:

**Any level of domestic violence offenders** Firearms make intimate partner violence all the more dangerous; American women are [five times more likely](#) to be killed in a domestic violence incident when there is a gun in the home, and many recent mass shooters have been linked to domestic violence. That's why we recommend [gun licensing denials](#) for any type of domestic violence offender.

### **Individuals convicted of misdemeanor-level hate or bias-motivated crimes**

There is a deadly history of hate crimes fueled by gun violence in America, and the Second Amendment has often been weaponized—literally—in service of white nationalist violence. Today, many communities still live under the threat of hate-driven gun violence, from anti-Black attacks like the shooting at the Tops Supermarket in Buffalo in 2022, to the shooting in El Paso, Texas, at a Walmart in 2019, which primarily targeted the Latine community, violence against the AAPI community, the LGBTQIA+ community and at places of worship like mosques and synagogues. Hate must be disarmed. We must ensure that individuals convicted of misdemeanor-level hate or bias-motivated crimes are prohibited from purchasing or possessing firearms.

### **“ERPOs” (Extreme Risk Protection Orders) or “Red Flag” Laws**

While an imperfect solution, ERPO laws give families and communities a civil remedy to disarm individuals who are a danger to themselves or others. A family member or law enforcement official can file a court petition, which is then assessed by a judge, ensuring the right to due process is respected. That judge makes the final decision on whether or not to grant the ERPO. In states that currently have ERPO laws in place, several [studies](#) have indicated that these laws reduce firearm suicides and potential acts of mass violence. However, we also recognize that, in its current iteration, ERPO Laws rely far too heavily on law enforcement to carry out the orders and remove firearms. Additionally, because of the significant role that law enforcement plays in communities, specifically Black and brown communities, there are [racial disparities](#) in how the ERPOs laws are used and perceived. This creates risk in their practice that must be mitigated. We advocate for specific racial impact analyses before implementing ERPO laws, and urge exploring other actors to carry out ERPO orders.



## Address the Harmful Marketing Practices of the Gun Industry

As the online world continues to be a driving force in purchases of all kinds, the gun industry has taken this opportunity to sell lies and prey on children through targeted advertisements. Toy gun advertisements for the “JR-15” extol the fact that the toy “looks, feels, and operates just like mom and dad’s gun.” The manufacturer of one of the guns used in the Sandy Hook school shooting in 2012 has an advertisement stating, “Consider your man card reissued.” The appeal is clear, equivocating violence with bravado and masculinity, a dangerous message to children—and to young men at risk of violence. Regulating marketing to minors is not an uncommon practice. Currently, in the United States, we rightfully regulate the marketing of [alcohol and tobacco](#) to children. This has been done with voluntary self-regulation when advertising alcohol. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) also [took action](#) against companies “selling e-liquids used in e-cigarettes with labeling and/or advertising that resemble kid-friendly food products, such as juice boxes, candies, or cookies, some of them with cartoon-like imagery.” In a county where young people already face a high likelihood of facing harm or death due to firearms, we mustn’t allow gun manufacturers to continue the glorification of firearms.

**JR-15™ GET EM ONE LIKE YOURS**  
22 Long Rifle

**SMALLER SAFER LIGHTER PATENTED SAFETY MADE IN USA**

Our goal was to develop a shooting platform that was not only sized correctly, and safe, but also looks, feels, and operates just like Mom and Dad's gun. Safety was so much at the forefront of our thought process that we developed and patented a tamper resistant safety that puts the adult in control of the firearms safety switch. The WEE1 and Schenck Tool team brought their collective experience in the firearms business, specifically the AR platform, to the table to launch the JR-15. We are so excited to start capturing the imagination of the next generation to enter the shooting sports.

**SPECIFICATIONS**

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| SIZE:     | 30 7/8"  |
| WEIGHT:   | APPROX 2LBS  |
| SAFETY:   | PATENTED TAMPER RESISTANT  |
| LOWER:    | POLYMER  |
| UPPER:    | POLYMER  |
| RAIL:     | STANDARD PICATINNY RAIL WITH M-LDPE (FOR ALL STANDARD ACCESSORIES) |
| TRIGGER:  | NANO MIL-SPEC  |
| BARREL:   | 18"  |
| SIGHT:    | NO SIGHT INCLUDED  |
| MAGAZINE: | 1RD, 5RD, 10RD, SHIPS WITH SINGLE RD MAG                           |

**WEE1 TACTICAL.COM**

**CONSIDER YOUR MAN CARD REISSUED.**

**BUSHMASTER**

It's good enough for the professional, it's good enough for you. Bushmaster. The world's finest commercial AR-platform rifle.

Gun manufacturers prey on a wild wild west of regulations, targeting their firearms to children and making appeals to potentially vulnerable individuals in their marketing tactics.

## **Funding for Gun Violence Prevention Research**

Gun violence prevention research is woefully underfunded. For over two decades, the federal government could not fund gun safety research thanks to the Dickey Amendment, kneecapping efforts to tackle gun violence. Meanwhile, other public health crises, such as car accidents and tobacco, have been invested in and researched. Following the March For Our Lives in 2018, Congress loosened a two-decade freeze on funding gun violence research. Since then, we've won over [\\$75 million in funding](#), but there remains more work to close the research gap. We need federal, state, and private philanthropy to fund live saving research to fund the decades old gap in understanding, to provide policy makers and practitioners with the tools they need to understand the most effective solutions for the current gun violence epidemic. Funding for gun violence prevention research should be included in government budgets and prioritized as a public safety initiative.

## **Prevent Gun Trafficking**

We advocate focusing enforcement action upstream, ensuring that [irresponsible gun dealers and manufacturers](#) who are supplying the illegal market for gun crimes are held accountable. This includes policy solutions such as:

**Permitting agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to update their systems and allow for rapidly searchable gun records across the agency**

**Requiring anti-theft reporting and training to deter [straw purchases](#)** (an individual purchasing a gun under their own name, when their intention is to re-sell it to someone who is prohibited by law from possessing a gun)

**Restricting "Buy Now, Pay Later" options for firearms**

**Requiring credit card companies to enact a unique "merchant code" for firearms sales**

**Creating a National Registry of Firearms** to ease tracking of stolen firearms, and hold gun owners responsible for their weapons, including when unreported stolen firearms are used in a crime

**Addressing international trafficking of firearms**, given that from [2014 through 2021, at least 70% of firearms recovered in Mexico](#) and submitted for tracing were from the United States, and we are fueling violence in numerous countries

## Create Offices of Gun Violence Prevention

Tackling the issue of gun violence in communities and our country is work that does not happen in silos. Many stakeholders, including community members, survivors, agencies, and local elected officials, must come together to identify and implement solutions that take a community-focused but centralized and multi-level approach to reducing violence. One of these solutions is creating an Office of Gun Violence Prevention (OGVP) at the federal, state, and local levels. We've advocated for this [solution since 2019](#), and happily, In 2023, our demands for the President to create a White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention were met. The White House OGVP, however, is contingent upon the President maintaining and funding it. We will continue to advocate for the maintenance of this White House office while encouraging states and localities to implement their own offices of gun violence prevention. Creating a successful office includes having [“a clear mission and scope, sufficient resourcing and authority, robust community engagement and planning, and insulation from political transitions.”](#)



Rep. Maxwell Frost, our first-ever Director of Organizing and now the first-ever Gen Z member of Congress, announcing the creation of the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

## Community-Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Program

While gun violence in our cities is not nearly as high as right-wing pundits make it out to be, gun violence in our cities accounts for a significant portion of the [14,000 gun homicides](#) each year. The ongoing impacts of structural racism and lingering disinvestment in communities of color [contribute heavily](#) to disproportionate levels of gun violence in Black and brown communities and demand structural solutions to attack the root causes of violence. But ample evidence also indicates that this violence is particularly concentrated within a specific subset of young men of color, often themselves justice-involved, with the impacts of that violence reverberating out far beyond into the community. Acknowledging this basic premise, we support



community-legitimate and [trauma-informed initiatives](#) such as Hospital-Based Violence Interruption Programs (HVIPs), Gun Violence Reduction Strategy (GVRS), and Street Outreach and Neighborhood Safety programs. These community-centered and data-driven programs interrupt and intervene in the cycle of violence by wrapping around individuals most at risk of committing or becoming victims of gun violence, significantly [reducing and preventing violence](#) in localities where robust programs are in place. These programs serve as a vital way to connect community resources to the people who need them most, addressing the root causes of gun violence in a holistic way that achieves the gold standard of gun safety—preventing the violence before it even occurs, in a way that law enforcement alone simply cannot do.

### Repeal “Stand Your Ground” Laws

“Stand Your Ground” laws codify an individual’s right to self-defense, often at the expense of others’ right to life. Absent these laws, when individuals act in self-defense, they have a “duty to retreat,” meaning that if they can safely avoid the conflict, they are obligated to do so. When a “Stand Your Ground” law is in effect, it often means that even if an individual is able to avoid conflict and violence safely, they are [legally permitted to use deadly force](#). Extensive research shows that these laws [increase firearm homicides](#), do not prevent crime, and instead often contributes to racist violence. Time and time again, we’ve seen these laws used as a way for white murderers to justify the killing of Black people. The shooting and murder of Trayvon Martin in Florida in 2012 and Ahmaud Arbery in Georgia in 2020 demonstrate the danger these laws present to young Black men. Everyone should have the right not to be shot, and it’s time to revoke the license to kill.

**“IT’S TIME TO REVOKE THE  
LICENSE TO KILL. REPEAL  
STAND YOUR GROUND.”**

## **Address the Protections Given to the Gun Industry**

One of the biggest favors granted to the gun lobby by Congress is the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), which gives gun manufacturers and dealers [broad immunity](#) from legal liability. The gun industry has claimed that PLCAA provides them with broad civil immunity, even when their products are defective or the companies behave neglectfully. PLCAA has disincentivized the gun industry from making technological innovations that may save lives. To hold the gun industry accountable, we must:

**Repeal PLCAA.** PLCAA is both an injustice as it removes a method of redress for gun violence victims and survivors and a shield for the industry from economic incentives to make their products and distribution channels safer. We must repeal it.

### **Encourage the passage of “public nuisance liability”**

**legislation.** Public nuisance laws protect public safety by prohibiting actions that endanger, harm, or interfere with people’s exercise of their rights and usage of public spaces. Such legislation can bypass some of the exemptions PLCAA creates by making illegal the negligent—and often, intentionally damaging—actions the gun industry takes to promote violence. This type of legislation can counter those effects in more municipalities and open the door for more lawsuits against the harm gun industry members have created.

## **Implement the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act**

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) was a historic bill passed in 2022 following the tragic shootings at Tops Supermarket in Buffalo, New York and Robb Elementary in Uvalde, Texas. Within a few weeks of these tragedies occurring, March For Our Lives organizers spent a week in Washington, D.C., advocating for significant change at the federal level. We organized, lobbied, and marched, demanding legislation that would make us safe – and we won. This was the first piece of federal gun violence prevention legislation to pass in nearly three decades. While imperfect, the BSCA included life-saving policies such as investments in mental health services, school safety, funding for extreme risk protection orders and community violence intervention programs, measures to partially close the “dating partner” loophole, background check enhancements, and other critical solutions to the gun violence epidemic. We aim to address the Act’s imperfections through the implementation process. We are committed to working with the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, the Department of Justice, and other government agencies to ensure the BSCA is equitably implemented and ensure available funding and resources go to evidence-based and equitable solutions—rather than politically convenient but ineffective solutions like armed school resource officers.



SECTION TWO

# Build a democracy for all





Addressing gun violence in our country also means ensuring democratic representation for all. Poll after poll shows that Americans want reasonable gun safety solutions. Despite that, politicians are gridlocked by partisan games, greased by the money of the gun lobby. When communities are involved and represented in the democratic process, the message is clear: We are tired of living in fear of gun violence. A truly democratic system of governance would have enacted gun safety legislation by now. To build a democracy that works for the people, we must advocate for a robust democracy and judicial system through:

#### **Automatic Voter Registration**

We must implement automatic voter registration when Americans turn 18 or new citizens are naturalized. Automatic voter registration is already state law in [18 states and the District of Columbia](#); it [increases voter registration rates](#), cleans up voter rolls, and saves states money.

#### **Voter Access**

It shouldn't be easier to buy a gun than it is to vote. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of having numerous options for casting a vote and saw many states expand their infrastructures for voting by mail and early in-person voting; making these changes permanent and continuing to build the infrastructure for multiple avenues of participation is crucial to reach voters who may otherwise be unable to vote. Along with automatic voter registration, we should encourage pre-registration of voters—[an existing practice in many states](#).

### **Voter ID Laws**

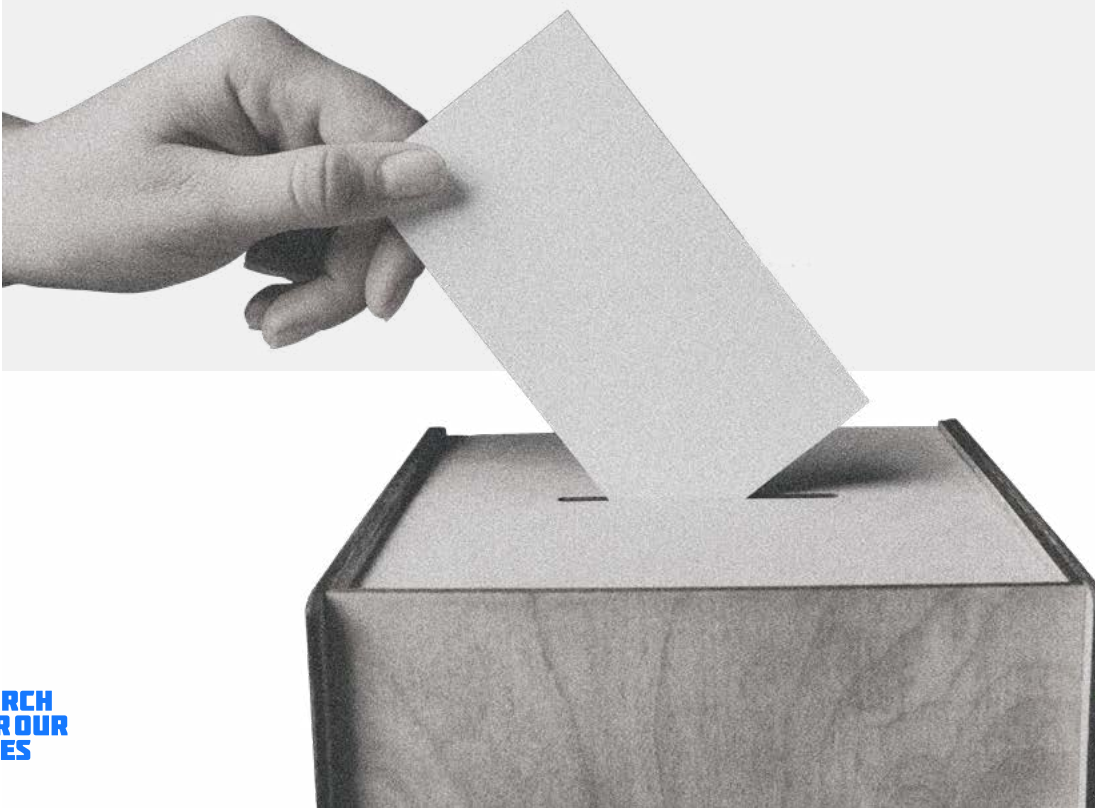
We cannot let politicians who gerrymander their seats restrict our right to vote with draconian laws and regulations. We must dismantle voting regulations and voter ID laws that continue to disenfranchise and disproportionately silence young people, voters of color, and people with felony convictions. A [negative correlation](#) has been found between the requirement of voter ID laws and [voter turnout](#). The more we participate in our civic process, the more effective we will be at reducing the impact of gun violence on the next generation.

### **End the Filibuster**

The legislative filibuster in the U.S. Senate is an outdated tool elected officials have weaponized to empower a minority of the Senate representing a small portion of the American people to [block](#) overwhelmingly popular legislation. A “Jim Crow relic,” the [filibuster](#) has been used on numerous occasions in history to block critical civil rights legislation intended to disenfranchise Black southerners specifically. It should not be allowed to continue blocking desperately needed [reforms](#).

### **Hold the NRA accountable**

The NRA has come under [increasing scrutiny](#) from multiple local, state, and federal officials for their alleged self-dealing and mismanagement. This should offend responsible NRA members and gun owners alike. In early 2024, the head of the NRA, Wayne LaPierre, announced his resignation days before his scheduled civil corruption trial in New York. LaPierre’s resignation came after the New York Attorney General (NYAG ) launched an [investigation](#) into the NRA’s finances, following a [complaint we filed](#) about the NRA’s potential illegal activity. Like the NYAG, we urge the Internal Revenue Service to investigate the NRA’s tax-exempt nonprofit status, and the Federal Election Commission must investigate whether the NRA has violated campaign finance laws.



## JUDICIAL REFORM AND CONSTITUTIONAL DEFENSE

The federal judiciary’s undemocratic structure makes it susceptible to partisan influence and emboldens extremist jurists to set unpopular policies that threaten our safety. Right-wing extremists have weaponized the courts to subvert the will of the people and undermine popular, common-sense gun safety bills. To protect our collective right to democratic self-determination, we must:

### Supreme Court Reforms

The makeup of the Supreme Court should not be determined for a lifetime by one individual in the White House. That is no democracy. Nor should we fear that unelected jurists with lifetime appointments might capriciously knock down democratic decisions by our elected officials. This breaks the cycle of democratic accountability and instead puts our democracy in the hands of irreproachable “kings in robes.” That is why we are calling to end lifetime appointments—including for sitting justices—, prevent presidents from appointing more than two Supreme Court justices during their term of office, and support other policies that address and remedy the political stacking of the Court.

### Mandate strong ethics rules

Supreme Court justices are not above reproach and should be subject to the same ethical rules for all attorneys and all judges in the United States. Any code of conduct for the Supreme Court must include robust enforcement mechanisms and hold the justices to the same standards set for lower-court judges. The Supreme Court recently established a self-written [ethics code](#). However, the Supreme Court was the party responsible for overseeing the code. A third party, separate from the Court, should monitor and oversee any ethics violations with a clear accountability system.





### **Appoint judges who represent the American people**

The President must appoint judges and justices who reflect the diversity of the United States and the values of the American people. To do this, the President should create an independent commission recommending justices. Our justice system must represent its communities with judicial appointees of diverse ages, races, ethnicities, genders, legal specializations, and educational backgrounds. The President must also appoint judges who recognize the government's interest in securing public safety and recognize that the Constitution guarantees all Americans a right not to be shot.

### **Overturing the *Bruen* Test (Even as we continue to win under it)**

The Supreme Court's 2022 decision in *NYSRPA v. Bruen* overturned centuries of jurisprudence and established a new method for assessing the constitutionality of gun safety measures, mandating a review of "history and tradition." This interpretation strays from the intentions of the framers of the Constitution, is susceptible to manipulation and modern bias, and is a glorification of a history that has excluded and oppressed anyone who is not a cisgender, heterosexual, white, Christian, able-bodied man. This method twists our Constitution and places a historical test on a modern epidemic. We firmly believe in the right of 21st-century individuals to devise novel, creative solutions to gun violence prevention. Even so, we also know that gun violence prevention remains constitutional even under the Bruen test. The United States has a robust history and tradition of enacting laws intended to protect its people from harm, and we cannot allow anti-gun-safety groups to rewrite history to insist otherwise. Moreover, Second Amendment rights are not unlimited. We cannot let anti-gun-safety groups trample on our rights to safety, free speech, and association by claiming an unlimited right to keep and carry a firearm.

### **Overturn Preemption Laws**

42 states have passed broad firearm preemption laws prohibiting localities from enacting reasonable gun laws tailored to their cities. Some states have strict penalties for local officials attempting to adopt local firearm rules or regulations. Preemption legislation also affects the rate of gun trafficking. [Studies show](#) that states with preemption laws export guns used in crime to other states four times more than states that allow localities the authority to enact safer gun legislation. Cities and localities in states that often have weak gun violence prevention laws deserve the ability to make decisions to keep their communities safe.

### **Expose the NRA's manipulation of the Second Amendment**

Since the 1970s, the NRA has embarked on a covert, underhanded campaign to rewrite public perception of the Second Amendment. In 2008, the conservative-leaning Supreme Court broke its 217-year-long precedent on the Second Amendment and ruled for the first time in *US v. Heller* that the Second Amendment gives individuals the right to keep and own guns as private citizens. Despite how recent *US v. Heller* is, many Americans think that the 2A has always been a stalwart protector of an individual right to guns. We must call attention to the NRA's track record of lies and manipulation and remind the public that the Second Amendment as we know it was created—not discovered—in 2008.





### SECTION THREE

**Create safe and healthy communities by addressing social and economic inequities, reimagining public safety, and eliminating state-sanctioned violence**

**TO BUILD A WORLD FREE OF GUN VIOLENCE, WHERE LONG-LASTING AND SUSTAINABLE SAFETY IS SHARED BY ALL, WE HAVE TO FIRST SOLVE THE ROOT CAUSES OF GUN VIOLENCE—THE REASONS PEOPLE PICK UP A GUN TO HURT THEMSELVES OR OTHERS IN THE FIRST PLACE. THAT BEGINS WITH ADDRESSING THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITIES AND NEGLECT EXPERIENCED BY BLACK COMMUNITIES, INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES, AND OTHER COMMUNITIES OF COLOR.**

Gun violence is often an expression of distress and desperation—a last resort when systems fail us. Guns fill the gap where resources are lacking. They are used to attain the resources and money needed to meet basic human needs, to find a false sense of safety, to cause self-harm, or to simply fulfill self-worth. We believe that meeting basic human needs is a crucial component to ending gun violence in this country, and that includes:

#### **Enhancements to Child Tax Credits and Earned Income Tax Credits**

We know that poverty and an increase in gun violence are [interconnected](#). The data shows these type of tax credits bring down poverty significantly. The data shows that these credits bring down poverty significantly. We must continue expanding both to cover more families and children.

#### **Investments in K-12 Schools and Expansion of Community Schools**

Funding for K-12 schools should go directly to the schools and students that need it the most, particularly in neighborhoods and communities that have historically been disinvested in. Educational funding across all levels of government should prioritize their budgets accordingly. Additionally, schools should be encouraged to adopt a [community school model](#) that considers local needs, assets and priorities to provide well-rounded educational opportunities and improve student outcomes.

#### **Provide Rental Assistance and Expand Affordable Housing**

Housing is a basic need. To address the lack of access to housing that many people in the US experience, it is imperative that we provide [ongoing rental assistance](#) due to the rising costs of rental housing and develop more affordable housing units as a longer-term solution.

#### **Universal Health Care**

Health insurance should not be a luxury. Health care is a basic need, and by implementing universal health care, everything from a simple doctor's visit to lifesaving treatment would be within reach to countless more Americans.

## Youth Employment Programs

A lack of meaningful opportunities often expresses itself as gun violence. [Extensive research](#) shows that providing youth with summer job opportunities has reduced interpersonal violence. Providing opportunities for economic mobility and workforce training is a direct way to invest in communities and reduce violence.

**TAKE  
ACTION**



## **PART OF TAKING A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO ENDING GUN VIOLENCE INCLUDES REEVALUATING WHAT PUBLIC SAFETY IN OUR COUNTRY LOOKS LIKE TODAY.**

Involvement in the justice system can too often actually be a risk factor for gun violence. Ineffective and often brutal policing practices and a dead-end justice system that prioritizes retribution over care simply recreate the cycle of violence rather than interrupt and end it. Our public safety system as it stands today does not solve violence, it simply recreates it. To interrupt violence, we must reimagine what safety looks like and invest in community-based and public health solutions to crime and violence rather than carceral solutions. The following section uncovers a number of comprehensive solutions that truly invest in safety and wellness, and create a system that invests in holistic and sustainable safety.

## Support for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Programs

There is a false choice in our country between stronger gun laws and more behavioral health funding. It is crucial to acknowledge that mental illness is not a risk factor for interpersonal gun violence; in fact, individuals struggling with mental illness are [more likely](#) to be victims of gun violence than [offenders](#). We aim to make mental and behavioral health services accessible in all communities. There must be mental health investment in schools nationwide by providing all teachers with training in trauma-informed practices, and implementing K-12 mental health education. We also know that suicides represent the [majority of gun deaths](#) in America, accounting for nearly two-thirds of gun deaths, while half of all suicides are committed with a firearm. Gun suicide rates are rising, particularly for [younger people of color](#), fueling a suicide crisis that has seen deaths [surge](#) 30% in the last two decades. As of 2022, gun suicides remain at an [all-time high](#). The firearm suicide rate among Black teens has notably [surpassed](#) the rate of white teens for the first time. We must invest in suicide prevention programs, including [gun dealer partnerships](#), behavioral health service programs, lethal means training for [health care providers](#), telehealth mental health service investments for rural communities, and suicide prevention hotlines. It's time to make these programs and services more accessible than firearms.

## Invest in Victim Compensation for Survivors of Gun Violence

The lasting effects of gun violence are devastating. To alleviate a portion of these aftereffects, we must provide survivors of gun violence with compensation for related expenses such as medical costs, mental health counseling, funeral and burial costs, and lost wages. [Crime victim compensation](#) programs exist in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. However, we must ensure that these programs are easily accessible to survivors of gun violence, too.

# 30%

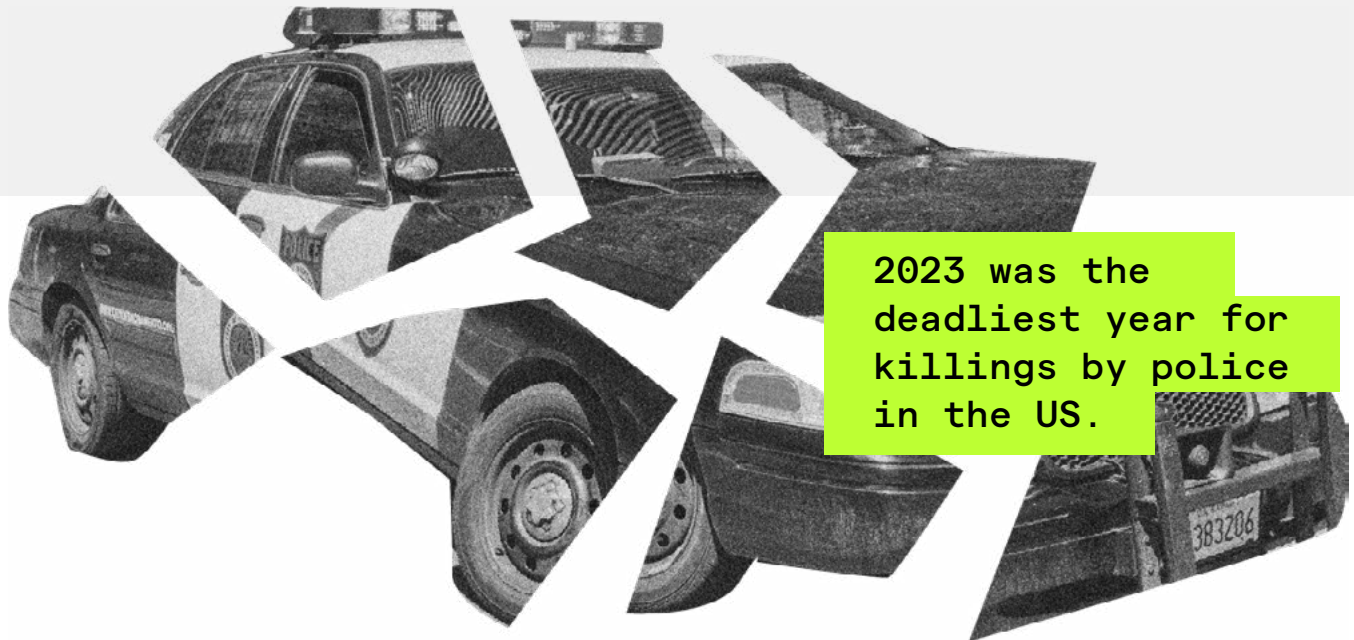
suicides have soared 30%  
in the last two decades,  
and firearm suicides are  
at an all time high.





## Criminal Justice and Prison Reform

America incarcerates [more citizens](#) than any other country in the world. We need to reduce prison admissions and adjust penalties to criminal sentences in a way that equitably holds individuals convicted of crimes accountable but does not punish for punishment's sake.



## POLICE VIOLENCE IS GUN VIOLENCE

Armed supremacy is the use of guns and the threat of gun violence to reinforce power structures, hierarchies and status, and we've seen this happen time and time again with law enforcement. We are morally obligated to recognize that our fight to end gun violence includes police violence. Therefore, it is essential to:

### Reduce the Size and Scope of Policing

96% of people killed by police are [killed by a gun](#), and Black people are nearly [three times](#) as likely to be shot and killed by police than white people. Moreover, police officers in departments across the United States are responsible for a [devastating number](#) of non-fatal gun injuries. Policing has become a solution to fix all social ills, from the housing crisis to the devastating lack of accessible mental health care. We propose a different way of building safety.

### Civilian response teams for non-violent 911 calls

Only [1% of all 911 calls](#) in major cities are to report a violent crime in progress, and less than 1/3 of 911 calls involve a life-threatening situation. As the first responders in almost all 911 calls, law enforcement officers are often in situations where having an armed individual is not only unnecessary, it raises the risk of harm. The overinvolvement of law enforcement only puts more Black lives at risk. We need to create and implement a cohesive response system that includes professionals like social workers, mental health counselors, and trained community members with the tools and training to appropriately respond to individuals in a crisis while reducing the level of risk to all involved.



# 1%

Just 1% of 911 calls in major cities report violent crimes in progress, yet nearly all first responders to calls are armed law enforcement officers.

### Invest in alternatives to “traditional” school safety measures

The response to school shootings and gun violence in schools has often relied on ineffective interventions that rely on knee-jerk, carceral solutions. Interventions such as hardening policies (i.e., metal detectors, clear backpacks, and over-surveillance) in schools and increasing the presence of law enforcement or School Resource Officers (SROs) only continue to [fuel the school-to-prison-pipeline](#) which targets Black students and other students of color, funneling them into a brutally violent and discriminatory criminal legal system, while producing negligent safety effects. Students need alternatives to these archaic school safety measures, including access to trained and supervised guidance counselors and social workers—in addition to common sense laws that limit access to firearms. If we only invest in solutions that can only come into action once someone has arrived on campus with a gun, we have failed and put our kids in danger.

### Empower Civilian Review Boards

While Civilian Review Boards exist in communities nationwide, many have limited capabilities regarding their role in police accountability. Civilian Review Boards must have appropriate and robust powers to [conduct investigations](#) into officers, subpoena for records, and discipline officers accordingly.

### End Qualified Immunity

[Qualified immunity](#) allows law enforcement to bypass accountability for using excessive force. Many times, this means that police brutality goes unpunished. We must end qualified immunity and ensure law enforcement is held to a high standard.

**DEMAND  
ACTION**



**The world we dream of is within reach. Young people have woken up, and refuse to continue to live with the status quo where the terror of gun violence lurks in every corner. We have a right to a world where we can live free of violence, and where safety and equity is held by all of us. We can, and will, build that work. Join us.**

**Federal, State,  
& Local Policy  
Guide**

If you are an elected official, community member, or young person interested in learning more about what you can do to help end the gun violence epidemic, read through our Federal, State and Local guide. These guides include specific legislative ideas to advocate for that align with the values upheld by our policy plan.



# IT ENDS WITH US



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**MARCH  
FOR OUR  
LIVES**