



FUPGV statement on mass shootings in Dayton, El Paso, & Gilroy

Within the span of a week, three separate mass shootings in Gilroy, CA, El Paso, TX, and Dayton, OH killed at least 36 people and wounded at least 66. As faith leaders we mourn this loss of life and grieve with those who have lost their loved ones. Mass shootings like these have become an all too common occurrence, but are not normal. We cannot sit idly by in the face of this sickening violence.

Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence (FUPGV) is a group of 50 national faith organizations, denominations, and groups committed to preventing gun violence. We are guided by our moral call to seek transformative action to reduce gun violence and heal our communities.

While it is mass shootings like these that drive media attention toward the issue of gun violence, it's important to remember that there are 100 gun deaths in America every day and hundreds more wounded. Suicides, domestic violence, unintentional deaths, and gun violence that impacts communities of color usually don't grab headlines. Yet the carnage caused by these forms of gun violence drive this ongoing public health crisis just as much, if not more so, than mass shootings. We mourn for this daily loss of life as well.

Just as shocking as the events themselves was the rationale behind the attack in El Paso: the shooter reportedly espoused hateful and racist views and published a manifesto shortly before opening fire. FUPGV stands firm in unequivocally rejecting white supremacy and white nationalism. We are reminded of our scriptures and holy teachings that we must treat our neighbors with love and respect. Finally, we are reminded that our faiths call us to action, and that we must work to disarm this violent hatred.

As such, FUPGV urges Congress to uphold their moral obligations - to take meaningful and substantive actions that can help prevent more tragic shootings like those that occurred in Gilroy, El Paso, and Dayton. We urge the Senate to take up S. 42 now. We find it unconscionable that the Senate has refused to take up even the smallest pieces of reform. S.42, the Background Check Expansion Act, is an incremental but important step to help stem the tide of gun violence from which none of us are immune.

We recognize that universal background checks alone are not enough to solve the enormity of this problem. We also believe that other things should be done, including providing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institutes of Health (NIH) with funding to research this public health crisis, passing extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs), reinstating an assault weapons ban, and making sure that no violent person or individual in crisis is able to purchase or possess a gun. It is unacceptable that weapons of war like those used in each of these mass shootings can be so easily purchased by racist individuals and used to ruthlessly destroy innocent lives.

The time for inaction has long since passed. We are in the midst of a moral crisis as a nation when we accept gun violence as the norm of our times. As we have found ourselves saying time and time again after tragedies like this, people of faith can offer more than our thoughts and prayers. People of faith must be present in developing solutions to end gun violence, and we must do more to help reduce gun violence



in our communities. Events like these are not outside of our control, and we are not helpless. Only by enacting substantive legislation can we begin to tackle the complex problem of gun violence in our country and our society.

We look forward to continuing to work with policymakers to advance common-sense gun reform measures that ensure the safety and wellbeing of all.

Sincerely,

Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence