

Month XX, 2018

**AN OPEN LETTER TO**  
**THE UNITED STATES CONGRESSIONAL LEADERSHIP AND THE CONGRESS**  
Religious, Civic, Human Rights and Other Service Organizations Interfaith Statement  
On Preventing Mass Shootings in Our Schools and Communities

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
United States House of Representatives  
Room H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Room H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

United States Senate  
The U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

United States House of Representatives  
The U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer, and all U.S. Senators and Representatives:

The undersigned organizations comprised of religious, civic, human rights and other community organizations urge you and all the members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to lend an attentive ear to the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and to students and young people from institutions, neighborhoods and communities throughout our nation who are pleading for the right to a safe education and secure environment.

On March 14, 2018, we witnessed a new generation mobilized to take a stand. On March 24, we witnessed hundreds of thousands of students converge on our nation's capital to walk into society and out from the halls of education to help each of us learn a new lesson in civic responsibility and engagement—a lesson that teaches us we can no longer allow business as usual to be the modus operandi of a civilized society's response to the mass killings of its children.

As people of faith we know prayer, faith, and love for our fellow man are bedrock principles upon which we begin building civil and legal society; yet as people of faith we are also charged to be vicegerents in the Creation, caretakers of and stewards of the gifts the Creator has entrusted to us, and we must be willing, indeed we are duty bound to go beyond words and mere wishful thinking to actively engage in sustaining, safeguarding and defending the foundation of our

society—that foundation is our people and especially those who are the least among these in their ability to defend themselves.

We believe your hearts are moved by the senseless violence all of us have and continue to witness. We believe your intellects must be moved by the passionate outpouring of never again from those most vulnerable and on the front lines of mass violence. Now we hope your legislative pens will move in the correct direction and with the urgency to act now.

From the types of weapons being manufactured and used to the regulations governing their sales and distribution, to addressing the psyche of those who would use them against their fellow man, to the need for professionally trained security, we ask that you first listen to each and every issue and demand from those who have experienced mass violence. Listen to those who have lost their loved ones. Then place yourself or your child in their shoes and at their desks and in their classrooms and in their neighborhoods—for then and only then do we believe you may arrive at a just balance of law.

Only when we reach a legislative balance respecting both life and liberty, and a just equity between individual and societal rights, can we begin to shrink the growing chasm of disappointment on the part of those who expect and deserve more from us.

You can help all of us restore the hope of a brighter future.

Together in faith,

[\*\*Click here to add your institution as a signer!\*\*](#)