
Action Item wc115: Resolution Formally Requesting the Congressional Delegation from Wisconsin to Act on Responsible Fire-Arm Legislation

Submitted by: Rev. Allie Scott, Rev. Krysta Deede, Rev. Dan Dick, Rev. Steve Scott, Rev. Kris Androsky, Rev. Douglas Clement, Rev. Afi Dobbins-Mays, Rev. Tina Itson, Rev. Jason Mahnke, Rev. Cathy Weigand, Rev. Michael Weigand

Conference Action:

WHEREAS, the United States has endured over 233 Mass Shooting incidents already in 2022, with most recent incidents in Buffalo, New York; Uvalde, Texas; and Tulsa, Oklahoma, accounting for 35 fatalities of the 261 people killed in mass shootings already this year (New York Times, June 3, 2022); and

WHEREAS, the United States has lost 152 children and 561 teenagers to gun violence yet this year (Gun Violence Archive); and

WHEREAS, the United States has, since 1999, suffered over 550 separate school shootings with at least 185 fatalities and over 311,000 children exposed to gun violence at school during that time (Washington Post); and

WHEREAS, the United States is experiencing a crisis of mental health, with 20% of all adults and 35% of young adults reporting worse mental health since 2019 and 70% of young adults reporting they are experiencing signs of depression (Stress in America 2020: A National Mental Health Crisis, American Psychological Association). Our Social Principles (§162.X, Book of Discipline 2016) state that mental health is a human right and that issues of mental illness and and those affected by mental illness must be addressed with compassion and humanity based on accurate information; and

WHEREAS, when we hear the tragic news of a shooting, United Methodists join with all people of faith in mourning with the victims and families of those wounded or killed, turning to God in prayer, and longing for a day when violence will cease; and

WHEREAS, our holy Scriptures teach that our prayers should lead us to action, and

WHEREAS, we confess our inaction as an Annual Conference in the years following the passage of Action Item 13, “A Call to Action on Gun Violence,” in 2018, which called for education, conversation, and advocacy within our local churches and in our local communities; and

WHEREAS, the United Methodist General Conference affirmed resolution #3428 in 2016, calling for an end to gun violence, access to services for those suffering from mental illness, and advocating for responsible fire-arm legislation, including the bulleted points below (The United Methodist Book of Resolutions #3428);

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Wisconsin Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church call upon the Congressional Delegation from the State of Wisconsin to support and act upon responsible fire-arm legislation. These measures include:

- Mandatory background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows and private sales.
- The extension of waiting periods to all fire-arm sales.
- The establishment of a minimum age of 21 to purchase a firearm.
- The prohibition of further sales of military style assault weapons (most notably AR-15-style rifles) and banning high-capacity magazines and weapons designed to fire multiple rounds each time the trigger is pulled.
- The expansion of mental health care as a guaranteed right and coverage to all persons.

Be it further resolved that this resolution is to be sent to the following persons upon approval:

- Senator Tammy Baldwin
- Senator Ron Johnson
- Congressman Bryan Steil, 1st District
- Congressman Mark Pocan, 2nd District
- Congressman Ron Kind, 3rd District
- Congresswoman Gwen Moore, 4th District
- Congressman Scott Fitzgerald, 5th District
- Congressman Glenn Grothman, 6th District
- Congressman Tom Tiffany, 7th District
- Congressman Mike Gallagher, 8th District