

PTA URGES CONGRESS TO PROTECT CHILDREN AND YOUTH FROM GUN VIOLENCE

WHO WE ARE

PTA is a network of millions of families, students, teachers, administrators and business and community leaders devoted to the well-being and educational success of all children. We are the oldest and largest child advocacy association in America, with a presence in every state and 18,000 PTA units across the country and abroad.

WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR

At PTA, we believe that no parent should fear for the safety of their child every time they leave home, but the reality is that over six in 10 parents today report worrying about school violence. Firearm injury is now the leading cause of death for children under the age of 19, surpassing car accidents, cancer and other diseases. Every year, an estimated 3 million American children witness gun violence, impacting their ability to learn and thrive. This includes the children and families traumatized by gunfire occurring on school grounds—over 1,197 incidents since 2013. School safety is a critical priority for all parents, educators, students and community members, and families can no longer wait—it is past time for our elected representatives to take meaningful action protecting our children from gun violence.

PTA Urges Congress to Pass Legislation Ensuring the Secure Storage of Firearms to Prevent Access by Children

- Evidence strongly suggests that limiting children’s and teens’ access to firearms limits the risk of injury and death, and that storing firearms locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition can reduce the risk of suicide and unintentional shootings amongst children and teens.
- An estimated 4.6 million children live in homes with at least one loaded and unlocked firearm in the U.S. Research shows that the majority of unintentional firearm-related shootings among children occur in or around the home, and most firearms used in school shootings perpetrated by shooters under the age of 18 were acquired from the home or the homes of relatives or friends.
- In January 2024, the White House [announced](#) executive actions to promote secure storage, and legislation is currently in development to encourage gun owners to store their firearms safely and out of reach of children and teens.
- PTA urges Congress to work on a bipartisan basis to pass secure firearm storage and child access prevention legislation that requires gun owners to store firearms, whether they are loaded or unloaded, in a securely locked container to prevent access by children under the age of 18 and that encourages community collaboration, coordination and education on the importance of secure firearm storage.

PTA Urges Congress to Pass the GOSAFE Act (S.3369) and the Assault Weapons Ban (S.25, H.R.698)

- Assault weapons are military-style weapons that are specifically designed to inflict extreme, widespread damage as quickly as possible. Since the federal ban on assault weapons expired 20 years ago, the ease of access to these weapons has led again and again to horrific tragedies in schools and communities across the country.
- Most Americans support commonsense gun safety measures, and studies have found that laws restricting access to these military-style weapons and large-capacity magazines have been effective in reducing gun-related deaths, injuries and fatal mass shootings.
- **PTA calls on members of Congress to co-sponsor two critical pieces of legislation protecting our children and communities: the Gas-Operated Semi-Automatic Firearms Exclusion Act (GOSAFE Act, S.3369) and the Assault Weapons Ban (S.25, H.R.698).**
- **The GOSAFE Act (S.3369)** would restrict access to gas-operated semi-automatic firearms, which includes assault weapons like AR-15s and AK-47s that have been a weapon of choice in mass shootings. Additionally, the GOSAFE Act would authorize grants for gun buy-back programs and require the Attorney General to publish a list of prohibited firearms and exempt firearms. Check if your Senator is a co-sponsor: [S.3369](#).
- **The Assault Weapons Ban (S.25, H.R.698)** already has over 200 co-sponsors and would prevent all new semi-automatic assault weapons and large-capacity ammunition devices from being sold, transferred, or manufactured. Check if your member of Congress is a co-sponsor: [S.25](#), [H.R.698](#).
- Neither of these bills would “take away” guns—firearms that would otherwise be prohibited but are already in a person’s possession would be “grandfathered in” and allowed to stay in a person’s possession. Rather, these bills seek to halt further production and circulation of these types of military-style firearms that have been used time and time again in school shootings, devastating families and communities.

PTA Urges Congress to Pass the Background Check Expansion Act (S.494) and the Bipartisan Background Checks Act (H.R.715)

- Recent polls show that the majority of Americans, including gun owners themselves, support running background checks on all gun sales.
- **PTA calls on members of Congress to co-sponsor the Background Check Expansion Act (S.494) and the Bipartisan Background Checks Act (H.R.715)**, legislation that would strengthen the background check system and help ensure that firearms no longer pass into prohibited hands under existing federal law.
- Check if your member of Congress is a co-sponsor: [S.494](#) and [H.R.715](#).

Questions? Email National PTA Director of Government Affairs Kate Clabaugh (kclabaugh@PTA.org).