



## **AAUW Arizona Gun Violence Resolution**

Whereas, there has been an accelerating trend in mass shootings in the United States since 2014, according to the Gun Violence Archive. (Gun Violence Archive defines a mass shooting as one in which at least 4 people are killed or injured, other than the shooter.<sup>1</sup>) However, mass shootings represent just a small fraction of shootings in Arizona and nationwide.

Whereas, there has been an escalation in gun violence incidents and deaths from all causes since 2018, particularly for children and teens. Almost every day, media sources nationwide report gun violence, either by suicides, unintentional shootings, domestic disputes, home invasions and other criminal activity or mass shootings.

Whereas, gun violence in the United States is a systematic problem, regardless of ethnicity, gender, geographic location and/or socio-economic status. It is the easiest country in which to legally own a gun. It is now the country in which incidents of gun violence are the leading cause of death in both adults and children. The United States ranks 8th in the world for gun violence and Arizona ranks in the highest 25% of states with firearm deaths.

Whereas, arguments against common sense gun regulation have been labeled as interference with the rights of citizens under the Second Amendment. Only 6% of our states have mandatory firearm registration. Gun violence should be considered a public health issue, not a political one.

Whereas, incidents of gun violence now occur in houses of worship, businesses, and public areas. The incidence of school shootings has increased exponentially since 2000, creating the need for metal detectors and armed adults on the school grounds. Allowing guns in schools may endanger not only the students, but also the teachers, staff, and visitors. It is unlikely that armed staff would be able to transform into highly trained law enforcement officers in a moment of extreme duress and confusion.

Whereas, school should be a safe haven for children and the last place where children worry about gun violence. Witnessing shootings, regardless of setting, can have a devastating impact on children and youth, including increasing use of anti-depressants, absenteeism, and drops in school enrollment and test scores. Children exposed to school shootings are less likely to graduate from high school and college. As adults, they are less likely to be employed and more likely to have lower earnings in their

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<sup>1</sup> Gun Violence Archive; [gunviolencearchive.org](http://gunviolencearchive.org)

mid-20's, have violent relationships, and become dependent on anti-depressants, illicit drugs, and/or alcohol.

Whereas, an effective school counseling program fosters a safe haven for students, with crisis intervention and support for students' social and emotional well-being easily available, Arizona's ratio of counselor to students is one of the worst in the nation.

Whereas, the AR-15 has become a symbol of the nation's gun violence epidemic through the proliferation of violent video games simulating realism. Semi-automatic and automatic weapons that promote aggressive behavior, have been transformed from combat weapons to mass market products. Additionally, there has been a proliferation of dangerous gun conversion devices - illegal gun modification devices that convert semi-automatic weapons into fully automatic weapons.

Whereas, the American Association of Family Physicians advocates for federal and state policies that can balance the right to own firearms with health, safety and well being of citizens. Appropriate gun violence research funding and public health surveillance are essential prevention strategies.

Whereas, AAUW's mission is to empower all women, girls and families to reach their highest potential,

Therefore, be it resolved that AAUW Arizona will,

- take a public stand in support of common sense strategies to combat gun violence through open dialogue and advocate for legislation at the state and branch level, including utilizing existing relationships with legislative advocates
- make an effort to gain greater knowledge, understand the critical nature of gun violence and advocate for strategies to address gun violence. AAUW Arizona efforts shall include communication to various media outlets, including editorials, social media, opinion pieces and letters, to reinforce AAUW's position on gun violence and to advocate for common sense legislation, including firearm registration (including permit-to-carry), background checks prior to registration, removal of semi-automatic weapons, bump stocks and weapons with high capacity magazines
- create specific action items for state branches to support implementation of gun violence resolutions and outreach
- join with like minded organizations to share our commitment to safe and supportive environments for all citizens, including advocacy for increased counselors and mental health professionals in Arizona public schools
- advocate for the enactment and implementation of firearm removal laws such as Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPO's) and Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO's)

- advocate for continuing research into the effect of gun violence on children, as recommended by the APA, particularly the causal link between violent video games and violent behavior
- request Arizona's elected officials and public office candidates to support measures to decrease gun violence

Passed by the AAUW Arizona Board of Directors May 13, 2023; Updated and Passed on  
(add date)

### **Footnote and References:**

- Gun Violence Archive: <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org>
- Gun Violence by Country: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-violence-by-country>
- Gun Violence by State: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/gun-violence-by-state>
- US Data on Gun Deaths: <https://siepr.stanford.edu/publications/health/surviving-school-shooting-impacts-mental-health-education-and-earnings-american>
- Weapon Types in Mass Shootings: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/476409/mass-shootings-in-the-us-by-weapon-types-used/>
- Gun Laws by State: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/state-rankings/gun-laws-by-state>
- Arizona Ratio of Counselors to Students : <https://www.axios.com/local/phoenix/2024/05/31/school-counselor-shortage-arizona>
- Leading Cause of Deaths in Children: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10042524/>
- Geography of Gun Violence in US: <https://thegunzone.com/where-does-most-gun-violence-occur-in-the-us/>
- School Shootings: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_school\\_shootings\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States\\_\(2000-present\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_school_shootings_in_the_United_States_(2000-present))