



# Resolutions To Action

LCWR Global Concerns Committee

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## End Gun Violence: Save Children's Lives

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*"The number of children and teens killed by guns in the U.S. in 2010 was nearly five times the number of U.S. soldiers killed that year in Iraq and Afghanistan. Shouldn't legislators be as concerned about the wars at home as they are about the wars overseas?"*  
-- Protect Children Not Guns 2013  
by The Children's Defense Fund

### EXPERIENCE

Jodi Sandoval's 14-year-old son, Noah McGuire, was accidentally killed last year by a friend who thought the gun was unloaded. The gun belonged to the shooter's grandfather.

Matthew Dwyer, 5, was shot by his brother with a pistol his mother had left out.

Cassie Culpepper, 11, was riding in the back of a pickup with her 12-year-old brother. He started playing with a pistol his father had lent him to scare coyotes. It fired, and blood poured from Cassie's mouth.

**A child or teen dies or is injured from guns every 30 minutes in the United States.**

Children in the United States are 32 times more likely to die from a gun homicide and 10 times more likely to die from a gun accident or suicide than their peers in other high income countries. Guns are the second leading cause of death among children and teens and the number one cause among black children and teens. Black, Hispanic, American Indian, and Alaska native children and teens are disproportionately more likely to die or be injured by guns. American Indian or Alaska native children and teens have the highest rate of gun suicides, nearly twice as high as white children and teens.

### SOCIAL ANALYSIS

There are many ways to enter the current debate in the United States regarding effective national gun control legislation. On one side of the argument are proponents of second amendment rights whose fears about stricter gun control laws center on loss of individual liberty and the right to bear arms in self-defense. Others fear losses in gun sales revenues and political influence if tighter gun control legislation is passed. On the other side of the argument are those who propose that second amendment rights were never

intended to trump the right to life and liberty often compromised by loopholes in background checks, straw purchases, and unenforced mental health requirements. Why, they argue, are automatic military style weapons available for sale to the public? While these positions continue to fuel the gun control debate, few take the position that a war against America's children is waging, and guns are the weapons of choice.

### Why is gun violence so prevalent?

In the United States there are almost as many guns as people -- approximately 310 million. By contrast, US military and law enforcement agencies possess a total of 4 million guns. American companies

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manufacture enough bullets each year to fire 31 rounds into every one of our citizens. The claim by the National Rifle Association that a gun in the home makes us safer is highly doubtful given the lack of documentation around this claim. Rather, for every time a gun in the home injures or kills in self-defense, there are 11 completed and attempted gun suicides, seven criminal assaults and homicides with a gun, and four unintentional shooting deaths or injuries.

### The Culture of Violence in the United States

The extent to which violence is shaping US culture seems to grow every day. Road rage, excessive aggression in sports, escalating violence glorified in media, and electronic games are but a few examples. Guns, for sure, are a deadly ingredient in the brew of violence, but our nation's culture of aggression forms the base and we even profit from it. The United States not only sells three quarters of the world's weaponry but also most of the world's violent entertainment. Fueling the culture of violence is big business in the United States.

### REFLECTION

Reflect on one or more of these quotes. What do they mean to you? How do they inspire you to take action to end gun violence?

- *Let the arms fall from your hands. One cannot love while holding offensive arms.* -- Pope Pius VI
- *I will not carry a gun. I'll carry your books, I'll carry a torch, I'll carry a tune, I'll carry on. But I will not carry a gun.* -- Hawkeye M\*A\*S\*H.
- *The truth is, what happened in Newtown can happen in any town.* -- Nelba Marquez-Greene, mother of 6-year-old Ana, killed in Newtown

- *We are compelled to work toward a world where reverence for all living beings finds expression in an approach to life free from violence.* -- LCWR Assembly 2013

### ACTION

1. Participate in the Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekend March 13-16, 2014. [marchsabbath.org](http://marchsabbath.org)

2. Urge your members of Congress to protect children from gun violence. Support common sense gun safety and gun violence prevention measures for the nation including:

- Universal background checks;
- Limits on assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines;
- Consumer safety standards, child-proof safety features, and authorized-user identification technology for all guns;
- Better preventive and therapeutic services for children and families facing violence in their homes and communities and for children with unmet mental health needs;
- Adequate funding for gun violence prevention research and programs; and
- Resources and authority for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and law enforcement agencies to properly enforce gun laws.

3. Urge state and local governments to protect children from guns. Urge your state legislators and local officials to

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support these measures as well as:

- Support laws to prevent child access to guns including childproofing and keeping all guns secured from unsupervised children;
- Support universal background checks;
- Support limits on assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines; and
- Oppose efforts to limit the ability of schools, physicians and others to warn parents and students about the dangers of guns;
- Encourage parents to remove guns from their home and be vigilant about where children play;
- Boycott businesses and products that glamorize and normalize violence;
- Bring attention to the number of children killed and injured by gun violence and the truth about guns;
- Offer parents and teens the resources, support and tools to survive and combat the culture of gun violence, such as Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, [www.momsdemandaction.org](http://www.momsdemandaction.org)

### Endnotes

1. Bearing Arms: Children and Guns The Hidden Toll by Michael Luo and Mike Mc Intire, *New York Times*, Sept. 28, 2013
2. Protect Children Not Guns, 2013 Overview: Children's Defense Fund. [www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/protect-children-not-guns-2013.pdf](http://www.childrensdefense.org/child-research-data-publications/data/protect-children-not-guns-2013.pdf)
3. Ibid.
4. *Journal of Trauma*. Aug;45(2):263-7. Kellermann AL, Somes G, Rivara FP, Lee RK, Banton JG.
5. U.S. triples foreign arms sales in 2011m August 27, 2012 CNN Senior National Security Producer.)

Note: There is an extensive online data base about hard core violent movies and video games. It is called Internet Movie Firearms Data Base. Read I.M.F.D.B. for a harrowing catalogue.