

### Spotlight on Gun Violence Prevention

**Presidential candidates offer real solutions to reduce gun violence.** Stating “enough is enough,”<sup>1</sup> Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) says her plan would reduce gun deaths 80% by “rein[ing] in an out-of-control gun industry.” Sen. Kamala Harris (D-CA) would use executive action for background checks and to regulate gun manufacturers.<sup>2</sup> Former VP Joe Biden and tech entrepreneur Andrew Yang say smart gun technology provides added safety as weapons are “keyed to....authorized owners,”<sup>3</sup> and “would make firearms harder to fire for non-owners of the gun.”<sup>4</sup> Those suffering from mental illness need support not guns,<sup>5</sup> says noted author Marianne Williamson, Rep. Tim Ryan (D-OH) and Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY). Formerly NRA A-rated, Rep. Ryan supports background checks<sup>6</sup> and has “called for mental health professionals...in every school,”<sup>7</sup> and Sen. Gillibrand admits “I was wrong [about guns]...It is not about hunters’ rights, it’s about money.”<sup>8</sup> Gov. Steve Bullock (D-MT) contends “the Second Amendment confers rights....they come with responsibilities...they can be forfeited,”<sup>9</sup> as he joins others like former Rep. John Delaney (D-MD) in supporting red flag laws.<sup>10</sup> Former Rep. Beto O’Rourke (D-TX), Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Mayor Pete Buttigieg (D-IN) propose creating national gun licensing programs and banning assault weapons.<sup>11</sup> Says the mayor, “since when are American cities and neighborhoods supposed to be war zones?”<sup>12</sup> Candidates who also support banning assault weapons, universal background checks, and high capacity magazine restrictions include:<sup>13</sup> Sen. Bernie Sanders (D-VT), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI), Gov. Jay Inslee (D-WA), and former HUD Secretary Julian Castro, who cites the rise in hate crimes as an urgent call to repair “our nation’s weak gun laws [that] enable violent extremism.”<sup>14</sup> In opposition to gun licensing, Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO) prefers “[requiring] everyone...to go through a background check.”<sup>15</sup> Mayor Wayne Messam (D-FL) also supports improving background checks, as does Rep. Seth Moulton (D-MA), who has called for “longer waiting periods for gun purchases.”<sup>16</sup> Presidential hopefuls like Mayor Bill deBlasio,<sup>17</sup> former Rep. Joe Sestak (D-PA)<sup>18</sup> and activist Tom Steyer also believe in banning assault weapons and universal background checks. According to Steyer, “The will of the American people is being frustrated...by gun manufacturers through the NRA.”<sup>19</sup>

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**Republican nominees stand firm with the NRA.** After visiting victims of the El Paso, TX mass shooting, the deaths of 22 innocent people did not dissuade President Trump from affirming that “there is no political appetite for a ban on assault rifles.”<sup>20</sup> Indicating an openness to expanded background checks, the President now says, “this is a mental health problem...It’s not the gun that pulls the trigger.”<sup>21</sup> Although his administration banned bump stocks, with the President stating, “I don’t care if Congress does it or not,”<sup>22</sup> he has reversed restrictions on mentally disabled people acquiring guns and opposes gun-free zones.<sup>23</sup> Former MA Gov. Bill Weld (R-MA), previously supported banning assault weapons and preventing guns sales to anyone under 21,<sup>24</sup> but he has updated his position, stating “restricting gun rights doesn’t make us safer, and threatens our constitutional freedoms.”<sup>25</sup>

### NEA Believes

Our kids and communities deserve a comprehensive approach to ending gun violence with common sense steps, including universal background checks, bans on assault rifles, a holistic approach to school safety instead of arming educators, and a renewed focus on mental health. In 2019, “there have been more mass shootings than days,”<sup>26</sup> and the time has come for real solutions that keep our communities and students safe.

<sup>1</sup> “Protecting Our Communities from Gun Violence,” [Medium](#), 8/10/2019

<sup>2</sup> Kamala Harris proposes executive action on gun control,” [The New York Times](#), 4/22/2019

<sup>3</sup> Joe Biden calls for development of smart guns that store your personal data after mass shootings,” [Newsweek](#), 8/12/2019

<sup>4</sup> “Where 2020 Democrats stand on gun control,” [Axios](#), 8/16/2019

<sup>5</sup> Ibid

<sup>6</sup> “After Las Vegas, Democratic House members donate their past NRA contributions,” [The Washington Post](#), 10/6/2017

<sup>7</sup> “Where 2020 Democrats stand on gun control,” [Axios](#), 8/16/2019

<sup>8</sup> “Senator Gillibrand ‘embarrassed’ by past conservative stances on guns, immigration,” [Observer](#), 2/12/2018

<sup>9</sup> “Steve Bullock pleads for end to gun violence (but not guns),” [US News and World Report](#), 8/7/2019

<sup>10</sup> “Every 2020 Candidates Gun Control Stance, in One Big List,” [Bustle](#), 6/2019

<sup>11</sup> “Where 2020 Democrats stand on gun control,” [Axios](#), 8/16/2019

<sup>12</sup> “Buttigieg outlines proposals for gun control, says Trump bears ‘some responsibility’ for shootings,” [CNN](#), 8/6/2019

<sup>13</sup> “Where 2020 Democrats stand on gun control,” [Axios](#), 8/16/2019

<sup>14</sup> “Julian Castro unveils gun control plan to ‘disarm arm’ and address domestic terrorism,” [The Week](#), 8/9/2019

<sup>15</sup> “Where the 2020 candidates stand on guns,” [The Trace](#), 8/15/2019

<sup>16</sup> “Here’s where every 2020 candidate stands on guns,” [Vox](#), 8/16/2019

<sup>17</sup> “NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio calls for stricter gun control laws in ‘Hannity’ appearance,” [Newsweek](#), 8/7/2019

<sup>18</sup> “The Issues,” [Politico](#), accessed 8/19/2019

<sup>19</sup> “How Tom Steyer would fight climate change, gun violence, and corporate corruption,” [PBS News Hour](#), 8/7/2019

<sup>20</sup> “Trump visits shooting victims in Dayton and El Paso, and lashes out at his critics,” [Los Angeles Times](#), 8/7/2019

<sup>21</sup> “Donald Trump’s gun control reversal should surprise exactly no one,” [CNN](#), 8/19/2019

<sup>22</sup> “What are bump stocks? Federal ban to go into effect Tuesday,” [Fox News](#), 3/26/2019

<sup>23</sup> “Every 2020 Candidates Gun Control Stance, in One Big List,” [Bustle](#), 6/2019

<sup>24</sup> “Trump GOP Challenger Bill Weld Supports Abortion on Demand, Endorsed Obama,” [The Tennessee Star](#), 4/18/2019

<sup>25</sup> “William Weld Responds to Libertarian Party Member Concerns,” [Reason](#), 5/21/2016

<sup>26</sup> “There have been more mass shootings than days this year,” [CBS News](#), 8/5/2019