



AAUW Arizona Resolution Addressing Gun Violence

Whereas by mid-April, there have been at least 145 mass shootings in the United States in 2023, according to the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit research group that tracks gun violence. (The group defines a mass shooting as one in which at least four people are killed or injured.) And mass shootings represent just a small fraction of shootings nationwide.

Whereas there have been 11,632 gun violence deaths from all causes thus far in 2023. Every day, 120 people in America are killed with guns and the gun homicide rate in the U.S. is 26 times higher than that of other developed countries with Arizona ranking 18th in the nation for its firearm death rate of 15.8 of every 100,000 deaths.

Whereas in 2023 there have been at least 39 incidents of gunfire on school grounds, resulting in 17 deaths and 30 injuries nationally and a school is the last place where kids should have to worry about gun violence.

Whereas firearms are now the leading cause of death for children and teens.

Whereas an estimated three million children in the US are exposed to gun violence, with nearly 4,000 children and teens shot and killed each year and 15,000 more hurt and injured.

Whereas witnessing shootings—whether in their schools, their communities or their homes—can have a devastating impact on children and youth. Multiple studies, including one published in the Journal of American Medical Association in 2018 found a link between childhood trauma and social, mental and physical problems in adults. Those who have experienced trauma as children were more likely to face a host of difficulties as adults, including having violent relationships, becoming dependent on drugs or alcohol, having a psychiatric disorder and becoming depressed or suicidal. Research also shows that the more incidents of trauma a child experiences, the greater the possibility for mental or physical problems to arise in adulthood.

Whereas an effective school counseling program helps schools foster safe, trusting school environments, crisis intervention programs and ensure that all students have access to support for social/emotional well-being, Arizona schools have a dismal ratio of counselors to students.

Whereas allowing guns in schools is an extreme measure that will endanger children, young people, teachers, staff and visitors. An armed teacher cannot transform into a specially trained law enforcement officer in a moment of extreme duress and confusion.

Whereas the AR-15 has become a symbol of the nation's gun violence epidemic with ten of the 17 deadliest U.S. mass shootings since 2012 involving ar-15s. Furthermore, the transformation of the ar-15 from a made-for-combat weapon to mass-market is the product of a sustained and intentional marketing effort for equipment not used in game hunting and is furthermore counterproductive to common well-being.

Whereas video games introduced a new generation to the ar-15 through popular first-person shooter games allowing players to simulate using military type weapons with realism. Studies have indicated that playing violent video games can increase aggressive thoughts, behaviors, and feelings. Violent video games can also desensitize people, of all ages, to the impact of aggressive behavior and can decrease prosocial behaviors such as helping another person and feeling empathy (the ability to understand others). The American Psychological Association (APA) considers violent video games a risk factor for aggression, though they note mental illness, adverse environments, and access to guns are also risk factors of aggression and violence and urge further longitudinal research.

Whereas the problem of gun violence is systemic and culturally pervasive throughout this country impacting the lives of both youth and adults, regardless of ethnicity, gender, geographic location and/or socio-economic status.

Whereas arguments against common sense gun regulation have been labeled as interference with individual rights and a constitutional right to bear arms has been used to intimidate and discourage efforts to address gun violence and protect the well-being of the public.

Whereas gun violence should be considered a public health issue, not a political one—an epidemic that needs to be addressed with research and evidence-based strategies that can reduce morbidity and mortality. We agree with the belief of the American Academy of Family Physicians that federal and state policies can balance the right to own firearms with health, safety, and societal well-being. Appropriate gun violence research funding and public health surveillance are essential prevention strategies.

Whereas all people need a safe, professional, supportive environment where they can grow, learn and work optimally;

Whereas the mission of AAUW is to empower all women, girls and families to reach their highest potential;

Therefore, be it *resolved* that AAUW Arizona:

1. Takes a public stand calling for an open dialogue and legislation addressing common sense strategies to combat gun violence.
2. Calls for increased efforts at the branch and state level to empower women and girls to gain greater knowledge, understand the critical nature of gun violence and advocate for strategies to address gun violence in their local areas and throughout the state. The increased efforts of AAUW Arizona shall include
 1. write guest editorials, opinion pieces and letters to media addressing AAUW Arizona's position and advocacy for common sense gun regulation;
 2. encourage programming in branch meetings and/or support offering programs in communities, colleges and schools;
 3. join with other groups in the state which share our commitment in seeking safe, professional, supportive environments where all citizens can grow, learn and work optimally;
 4. advocate for increased counselors in AZ public schools to support the emotional well-being of students.
 5. advocate for strategies such as red flag laws, require background checks of all buyers of guns regardless of source of purchase, removal of ar-15s, bump stocks and high-powered capacity magazines which allow for rapid fire shootings.
 6. advocate for the implementation of firearm purchaser licensing (also known as permit-to-purchase) that requires prospective gun purchasers to obtain a license prior to buying a gun.
 7. advocate for the enactment and implementation of firearm removal laws—Domestic Violence Protection Orders (DVPOs) and Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs).
 8. advocate for increased research (especially longitudinal studies) as recommended by the APA, studying delinquency, violence, and criminal behavior as outcomes to determine whether or not violent video games are linked to violence.
 9. ask Arizona's elected officials and candidates for public office to sign a pledge to do all that they can to end gun violence.

Passed by the AAUW Arizona Board of Directors May 17, 2023

References:

Gun Violence Archive. <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>

GVA - Seven Year Review	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Deaths - Willful, Malicious, Accidental	15,139	15,742	14,943	15,509	19,558	21,009	20,200
Suicides by Gun	22,938	23,854	24,432	23,941	24,292	26,328	Pending
Injuries - Willful, Malicious, Accidental	30,586	31,358	28,285	30,199	39,542	40,603	38,550
Children [aged 0-11] Killed or Injured	665	734	665	696	1,001	1,065	995
Teens [aged 12-17] Killed or Injured	3,154	3,296	2,883	3,129	4,159	4,645	5,157
Mass Shooting	383	348	336	417	610	690	647
Murder-Suicide	549	608	623	632	570	594	670
Defensive Use [DGU]	1,993	2,118	1,889	1,619	1,513	1,295	1,178
Unintentional Shooting	2,235	2,065	1,696	1,912	2,336	2,027	1,626

Number of Deaths, Injuries, Children, Teens killed/injured [actual numbers]
 Mass Shooting, Murder-suicides, Defensive Use, Unintentional Shooting [number of incidents]
 Suicide numbers supplied by CDC End of Year Report [actual numbers]

@gundeaths
www.gunviolencearchive.org
www.facebook.com/gunviolencearchive

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- K-12 School Shooting Data base -- <https://k12ssdb.org/>

-VOA Special Report: History of Mass Shooters— <https://projects.voanews.com/mass-shootings/>

-Everytown Research & Policy -- <https://everytownresearch.org/maps/gunfire-on-school-grounds/>

-NCES: Deaths at School and Away From School and School Shootings - <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/coe/indicator/a01/violent-deaths-and-shootings?tid=4>

-Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions. (2022). A Year in Review: 2020 Gun Deaths in the U.S. Available: <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/gun-violence-solutions>

Violent Video Games and Aggression by Lauren Goldbeck and Alex Pew, National Center for Health Research. <https://www.center4research.org/violent-video-games-can-increase-aggression/>

“The Direct Effects and Existential Dread Created by Gun Violence” by Emmett Lindner. The New York Times. April 11, 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/11/insider/gun-violence-readers.html>

Gun Violence, Prevention of (Position Paper). The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP). 2018. [https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/prevention-gunviolence.html#Prevention%20of%20Gun%20Violence%20\(Policy%20Statement\)](https://www.aafp.org/about/policies/all/prevention-gunviolence.html#Prevention%20of%20Gun%20Violence%20(Policy%20Statement))