



February 11, 2013

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Sen. Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: U.S. Mayors Call on Congress to Support Assault Weapons Ban

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Reid, Leader Pelosi, and Leader McConnell:

Military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines have been at the center of some of our country's deadliest mass shootings. Just since July, we have watched in horror as they have been used to gun down moviegoers in an Aurora theater, Sikh worshippers in an Oak Creek temple, and even young children in a Newtown elementary school. In order to prevent the next rampage and help save American lives, our nation needs clear and enforceable legislation that will take these weapons and magazines off our streets.

As the men and women who are responsible for protecting those streets, we write to urge your support for the **Assault Weapons Ban of 2013 (S. 150 / H.R. 437)**, introduced by Senator Dianne Feinstein and Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy. Our bipartisan coalition of more than 850 U.S. mayors stands firmly behind this bill, which would ban the importation, sale, manufacture, transfer, and possession of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines – with some exceptions, including for law enforcement and military use, as well as for those weapons lawfully owned at the time of enactment.

In an effort to strengthen the now-expired 1994 version of the ban, this legislation would broaden the definition of “assault weapon” to prevent manufacturers from remodeling their weapons to circumvent the law. The new ban would be permanent and would require background checks for grandfathered weapons that are sold or transferred after the enactment date, including those sold or transferred by private sellers. It would also prohibit the sale and transfer of grandfathered high-capacity ammunition magazines.

These measures would go a long way toward ensuring the safety of our communities, and they enjoy the backing of a majority of Americans – including gun owners.

While military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines often play a prominent role in mass shootings, they are also a common threat in everyday incidents of gun violence that don't always make national headlines. According to the Department of Justice, high-capacity magazines are used in 14 to 26 percent of all gun crimes and in 31 to 41 percent of fatal police shootings. As Oklahoma City Police Chief Bill Citty said in January 2011 after one of his officers was fatally ambushed by a teenager with a semiautomatic AR-15: "There are just more and more assault rifles out there, and it is becoming a bigger threat to law enforcement each day. They are outgunned."

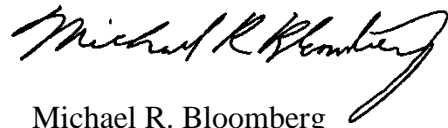
It's no wonder law enforcement groups across the country support a ban on these military-style weapons and high-capacity magazines, including the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCC), and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF).

We hope you will stand up for our communities, our law enforcement officials, and our children by supporting this common-sense proposal to curb gun violence. Far too many Americans are being killed with deadly assault weapons – it's up to you to act.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Menino
Coalition Co-Chair
Mayor of Boston



Michael R. Bloomberg
Coalition Co-Chair
Mayor of New York City

Signed by Members of Mayors Against Illegal Guns:

Mayor Samuel L. Jones, Mobile, Alabama
Mayor Satish I. Hiremath, Oro Valley, Arizona
Mayor Scott LeMarr, Paradise Valley, Arizona
Mayor Greg Stanton, Phoenix, Arizona
Mayor Jennifer Eckstrom, South Tucson, Arizona
Mayor Bill Rappaport, Star Valley, Arizona
Mayor Mark W. Mitchell, Tempe, Arizona
Mayor Jonathan Rothschild, Tucson, Arizona
Mayor Larry S. Bryant, Forrest City, Arkansas
Mayor Arnell Willis, Helena, Arkansas
Mayor Lawrence Owens, Hughes, Arkansas
Mayor McKinzie Riley, Wrightsville, Arkansas
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Mayor Wade Harper, Antioch, California
Mayor Elizabeth Patterson, Benicia, California
Mayor Tom Bates, Berkeley, California
Mayor Cheryl Cox, Chula Vista, California
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Mayor Diane Furst, Corte Madera, California
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Mayor John Reed, Fairfax, California
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Mayor Ronald S. Cooper, Lake Success, New York
Mayor Anne H. McAndrews, Larchmont, New York

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Mayor Norman L. Marsh, Little Valley, New York
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Mayor Geoffrey N. Prime, South Floral Park, New York
Mayor Patricia DuBow, South Nyack, New York
Mayor Mark Epley, Southampton, New York
Mayor Letty J. Rudes, Speculator, New York

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Mayor David Goldsmith, Wesley Hills, New York
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Mayor John Ramundo, Jr., West Haverstraw, New York
Mayor David Carr, Westfield, New York
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Mayor Mark Chilton, Carrboro, North Carolina
Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt, Chapel Hill, North Carolina
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Mayor Daniel S. Pocek, Bedford, Ohio
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Mayor David Seagraves, Brookville, Ohio
Mayor Lowell E. Anderson, Caldwell, Ohio
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Mayor Gail Stoudt, Bernville, Pennsylvania
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Mayor Anthony J. Court, Ellwood City, Pennsylvania
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Mayor Charles Moore, Falls Creek, Pennsylvania
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Mayor Tim McGuire, Homewood Borough, Pennsylvania
Mayor Dee Dee Brown, Huntingdon Borough, Pennsylvania
Mayor John J. Zano, Hyde Park, Pennsylvania

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Mayor Thomas S. Kramer, Millbourne, Pennsylvania
Mayor Richard Trostle, Mohnton, Pennsylvania
Mayor John P. Antoline, Monaca, Pennsylvania
Mayor Mary Jo Smith, Monessen, Pennsylvania
Mayor John Dorin, Montoursville, Pennsylvania
Mayor Maureen A. Piselli, Morton, Pennsylvania
Mayor Timothy M. Allison, Mount Union, Pennsylvania
Mayor Raymond Bodnar, Munhall, Pennsylvania
Mayor Stephen Szymusiak, Nanty-Glo, Pennsylvania
Mayor Joseph Taylor, New Milford, Pennsylvania
Mayor Frances Tkach, New Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Mayor Nicholas W. DeSantis, New Stanton, Pennsylvania
Mayor Mary M. Hetrick, Newport, Pennsylvania
Mayor Lee I. Hall, North Charleroi, Pennsylvania
Mayor Thomas Reenock, Northhampton, Pennsylvania
Mayor George F. McCloskey, Norwood, Pennsylvania
Mayor Michele Petrini Avvisato, Old Forge, Pennsylvania
Mayor Austin Scandiber, Orwigsburg, Pennsylvania
Mayor Lewis Paul Cowher, Osceola Mills, Pennsylvania
Mayor Geoffrey L. Henry, Oxford, Pennsylvania
Mayor Fred Carpenter, Palmyra, Pennsylvania
Mayor William McCall, Parker, Pennsylvania
Mayor Ardele R. Gordon, Parkside, Pennsylvania
Mayor Robert Winkler, Penndel, Pennsylvania
Mayor Michael Nutter, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Mayor Kimberly D. Brown-Zerbe, Pine Grove, Pennsylvania
Mayor Luke Ravenstahl, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Mayor Bonnie Heath, Pottstown, Pennsylvania
Mayor John D.W. Reiley, Pottsville, Pennsylvania
Mayor Vaughn D. Spencer, Reading, Pennsylvania
Mayor Dr. Guillermo Udarbe, Ridgway, Pennsylvania
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Mayor Edwin W. Rosenberry, Saxton, Pennsylvania
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Mayor Robert O'Neill, Sharon Hill, Pennsylvania
Mayor Richard Panza, Sharpsburg, Pennsylvania
Mayor Bruce Hockersmith, Shippensburg, Pennsylvania
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Mayor William Meyer, Somerset, Pennsylvania
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Mayor Francis B. Zalewski, Trainer, Pennsylvania
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Mayor LeAnn Hritz, Tunnelhill, Pennsylvania
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Mayor Frank Schmidt, West Hazleton, Pennsylvania
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Mayor John Henry, West View, Pennsylvania
Mayor Dick Vargeson, Westfield, Pennsylvania
Mayor James F. Nowalk, Whitehall Borough, Pennsylvania
Mayor Edward D. Hozza, Jr., Whitehall Township, Pennsylvania
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Mayor John A. Thompson, Wilkinsburg, Pennsylvania
Mayor David Perruso, Wilson, Pennsylvania
Mayor Larry Markel, Windsor, Pennsylvania
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Mayor John Sanford, Yoe, Pennsylvania
Mayor C. Kim Bracey, York, Pennsylvania
Mayor Alford Shull, York Springs, Pennsylvania
Mayor Joan Derco, Youngwood, Pennsylvania
Mayor Charles Lombardi, North Providence, Rhode Island
Mayor Donald Grebien, Pawtucket, Rhode Island
Mayor Angel Taveras, Providence, Rhode Island
Mayor Scott Aredisian, Warwick, Rhode Island
Mayor Joseph Riley, Charleston, South Carolina
Mayor Joseph T. McElveen, Jr., Sumter, South Carolina
Mayor Darrick Jackson, Timmonsville, South Carolina
Mayor Ron Littlefield, Chattanooga, Tennessee
Mayor Jerry Gist, Jackson, Tennessee
Mayor Thomas W. Taylor, Maryville, Tennessee
Mayor A C Wharton, Memphis, Tennessee
Mayor Tom Beehan, Oak Ridge, Tennessee
Mayor Bill Lusk, Signal Mountain, Tennessee
Mayor Lee Leffingwell, Austin, Texas
Mayor Tony Martinez, Brownsville, Texas
Mayor Carl D. Sherman, DeSoto, Texas
Mayor Annise D. Parker, Houston, Texas
Mayor Richard Ward, Hurst, Texas
Mayor Dave Claunch, West Lake Hills, Texas
Mayor Dana Williams, Park City, Utah
Mayor John Hollar, Montpelier, Vermont
Mayor Christopher C. Louras, Rutland City, Vermont
Mayor William B. Euille, Alexandria, Virginia
Mayor Faye Prichard, Ashland, Virginia
Mayor Satyendra Singh Huja, Charlottesville, Virginia
Mayor McKinley Price, Newport News, Virginia
Mayor Paul D. Fraim, Norfolk, Virginia
Mayor Brian A. Moore, Petersburg, Virginia
Mayor Robert W. Lazaro, Jr., Purcellville, Virginia
Mayor Dwight C. Jones, Richmond, Virginia

Mayor David A. Bowers, Roanoke, Virginia
Mayor William D. Sessoms, Jr., Virginia Beach, Virginia
Mayor Kelli Linville, Bellingham, Washington
Mayor H. Clarence Bauman, Chewelah, Washington
Mayor Garland D. Walton, Connell, Washington
Mayor Will Ibershof, Duvall, Washington
Mayor Liz Reynolds, Enumclaw, Washington
Mayor Gary S. Jensen, Ferndale, Washington
Mayor Ava Frisinger, Issaquah, Washington
Mayor Ron Poulson, Kalama, Washington
Mayor David M. Ferguson, Mesa, Washington
Mayor Daniel N. Mork, Millwood, Washington
Mayor James F. Gerwig, Morton, Washington
Mayor Dennis Palmer, Oakesdale, Washington
Mayor Spencer Nichols, Pe Ell, Washington
Mayor Paul Warden, Prosser, Washington
Mayor John Marchione, Redmond, Washington
Mayor Terry Anderson, SeaTac, Washington
Mayor Mike McGinn, Seattle, Washington
Mayor Matthew Larson, Snoqualmie, Washington
Mayor Dianne W. White, Stanwood, Washington
Mayor Marilyn Strickland, Tacoma, Washington
Mayor Soo Ing-Moody, Twisp, Washington
Mayor Richard F. Turner, Mayor, Weehawken
Mayor Harrold H. Howell, Jr., Madison, West Virginia
Mayor William C. Whalen, Ashland, Wisconsin
Mayor Larry MacDonald, Bayfield, Wisconsin
Mayor Keith G. Bosman, Kenosha, Wisconsin
Mayor Paul R. Soglin, Madison, Wisconsin
Mayor Justin M. Nickels, Manitowoc, Wisconsin
Mayor Chris L. Meyer, Marshfield, Wisconsin
Mayor Kurt Sonnentag, Middleton, Wisconsin
Mayor Tom Barrett, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Mayor Steve Scaffidi, Oak Creek, Wisconsin
Mayor John T. Dickert, Racine, Wisconsin
Mayor James E. Tipple, Wausau, Wisconsin
Mayor Vincent C. Gray, Washington, D.C.



FAITHS UNITED TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

100 Maryland Avenue NE • Washington DC 20002

January 15, 2013

Dear Member of Congress:

On Martin Luther King Day, January 17, 2011, 24 national faith groups announced the formation of “Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence,” a diverse coalition of denominations and faith-based organizations united by the call of our faiths to confront America’s gun violence epidemic and to rally support for policies that reduce death and injury from gunfire. Two years later, we have grown to more than 40 groups representing tens of millions of Americans in faith communities across the nation – and our call to confront this epidemic has grown ever more urgent and imperative.

The recent loss in Connecticut of 20 innocent young children, of the teachers and administrators that cared for them, and of a desperately troubled young man and his mother, tears our hearts and minds to the core. Faith leaders in Newtown have been on the front line of responding to the grief and pain of the families whose loss is unimaginable, and of the entire community there. Across the country, we grieve with our own congregants and communities, and we share their determination to do all within our power to ensure that this never happens again.

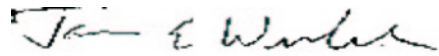
In light of the tragedy in Newtown – and in Aurora, Tucson, Fort Hood, Virginia Tech, Columbine, Oak Creek, and so many more – we know that no more time can be wasted. Gun violence is taking an unacceptable toll on our society, in mass killings and in the constant day-to-day of senseless death. While we continue to pray for the families and friends of those who died, we must also support our prayers with action. We should do everything possible to keep guns out of the hands of people who may harm themselves or others. We should not allow firepower to kill large numbers of people in seconds anywhere in our civil society. And we should ensure that law enforcement has the tools it needs to stop the virtually unrestrained trafficking of guns.

Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence member organizations, representing millions of people across the country, urge you to respond to this crisis in our nation. With each day that goes by, dozens more of our children, parents, brothers, and sisters are lost to gun violence. We support immediate legislative action to accomplish the following:

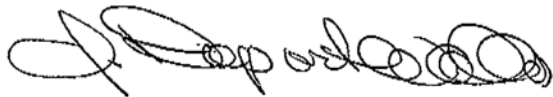
- **Every person who buys a gun should pass a criminal background check.** Preventing dangerous people from getting firearms has to be a top priority. Universal background checks via the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) should be utilized in every gun sale, including guns sold online, at gun shows, and through private sales.
- **High-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines should not be available to civilians.** There is no legitimate self-defense or sporting purpose for these military-style, high-capacity weapons and magazines. They are, however, the weapons of choice for those who want to shoot and kill a large amount of people quickly. It’s time to build off of the federal assault weapons ban that expired in 2004 and draft an updated law that will take these weapons off our streets.
- **Gun trafficking should be made a federal crime.** Currently, prosecutions only happen through a law that prohibits selling guns without a federal license, which carries the same punishment as trafficking chicken or livestock. We must empower law enforcement to investigate and prosecute straw purchasers, gun traffickers, and their entire criminal networks.

In recent weeks, the American people have come together in a national outpouring of grief and sympathy for the families of victims slain in the mass shooting in Newtown. We share in that grief, but will not let it substitute for action. We look forward to working with you to enact these common-sense measures to reduce gun violence. Should you or your staff have questions or need additional information, please visit our website at www.faithsagainstgunviolence.org or contact our National Coordinator, Vincent DeMarco, by email at demarco@mdinitiative.org or by phone at 410-591-9162.

Sincerely,



James Winkler
Chair, Faiths United To Prevent Gun Violence
General Secretary, General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Church



Jacquelyn Dupont-Walker, Director, Social Action Commission
African Methodist Episcopal Church



Carol Blythe, President
Alliance of Baptists



Dr. Walter L. Parrish, II, Executive Minister
American Baptist Churches of the South




Dr. Aidsand F. Wright-Riggins III, Executive Director
American Baptist Home Mission Societies



Shan Cretin, General Secretary
American Friends Service Committee



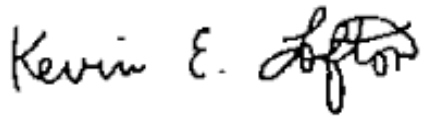
Rev. LeDayne McLeese Polaski, Program Coordinator
Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America



Father Larry Snyder, CEO
Catholic Charities USA



Sister Carol Keehan, D.C., President and CEO
Catholic Health Association



Kevin E. Lofton, President and CEO
Catholic Health Initiatives



Fred Rotondaro, Chairman of the Board
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good



James Salt, Executive Director
Catholics United



Stanley J. Noffsinger, General Secretary
Church of the Brethren



Djamillah Samad, National Executive
Church Women United, Inc.



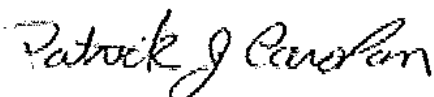
Very Rev. John Edmunds ST, President
Conference of Major Superiors of Men



Rev. Ronald J. Degges
Disciples Home Missions, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)



Sr. Margaret Ormond, O.P. and the Leadership Team
Dominican Sisters of Peace



Patrick Carolan, Executive Director
Franciscan Action Network



Diane Randall, Executive Secretary
Friends Committee on National Legislation



Marlene Feagan, President
Health Ministries Association



Bryan Miller, Executive Director
Heeding God's Call



Suhag Shukla
Executive Director and Legal Counsel
Hindu American Foundation



Dr. Sayyid M. Syeed, National Director for Interfaith and Community Alliances
Islamic Society of North America



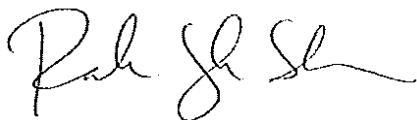
Rabbi Steve Gutow, President,
Jewish Council for Public Affairs



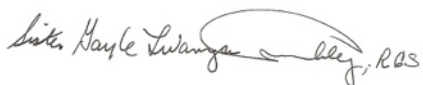
Rabbi Mordecai Leibling,
Jewish Reconstructionist Movement



Janet Mock, CSJ, Executive Director
Leadership Conference of Women Religious



Rachelle Lyndaker Schlabach, Director
Mennonite Central Committee, Washington Office



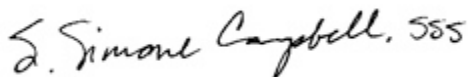
Sister Gayle Lwanga,
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd



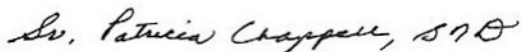
Peg Birk, Transitional General Secretary
National Council of Churches



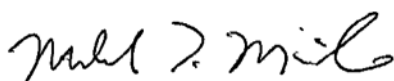
Matthew Ellis, Executive Director
National Episcopal Health Ministries



Simone Campbell, SSS, Executive Director
NETWORK, A National Catholic Social Justice Lobby



Patricia Chappell, SNDdeN, Executive Director
Pax Christi USA



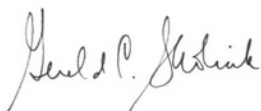
Pastor Michael McBride, M.Div.,
PICO Network Lifelines to Healing



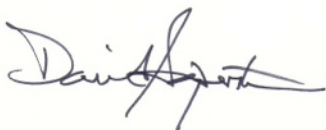
Reverend J. Herbert Nelson, II, Director for Public Witness
Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) Office of Public Witness



Dr. Carroll Baltimore, President
Progressive National Baptist Convention



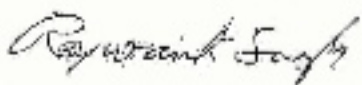
Rabbi Gerald Skolnik,
Rabbinical Assembly



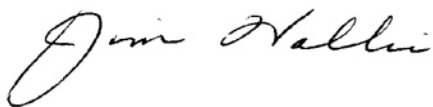
Rabbi David Saperstein, Director and Counsel
Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism



Sister Patricia McDermott, RSM, President
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas



Dr. Rajwant Singh, Chairman
Sikh Council on Religion and Education, USA



Rev. Jim Wallis, President and CEO
Sojourners



Rev. Craig C. Roshaven, Witness Ministries Director
Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations



Rev. Geoffrey A. Black, General Minister and President
United Church of Christ



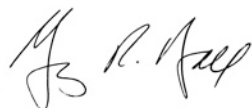
Harriett Jane Olson, CEO and General Secretary
United Methodist Women



Most Reverend Stephen E. Blaire
Bishop of Stockton, Chairman
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops Committee on Domestic Justice and Human Development



Rabbi Steven Wernick, Executive Vice President and CEO
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism



The Very Rev. Gary Hall,
Washington National Cathedral



Rabbi Marla Feldman, Executive Director
Women of Reform Judaism