NASP Calls for Reinstatement of the Assault Weapons Ban and Other Gun Safety Laws

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) echoes the anger and grief being expressed by so many across the country at the continued, senseless gun violence that is taking the lives of innocent children and adults. In the last 7 days, there have been four incidents of gun violence on school property that claimed the lives of 12 people and injured seven others. Our thoughts and support are with all of those affected by gun violence, including the shooting that occurred today at the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee. But we know this is not enough by any measure.

Gun violence is now the number one cause of death among children and teens. The real threat to our nation’s children and families is not social–emotional learning or inclusive curricula, it is unfettered access to weapons and politicians’ refusal to reinstate the assault weapons ban.

We need stronger gun safety laws now.

NASP has worked with Congress and multiple Administrations urging more effective, commonsense, long-overdue gun safety laws, including reinstating the assault weapons ban. We worked closely on and supported the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act in the wake of the Uvalde shooting last year, with the expectation that this was the first in renewed federal efforts to end gun violence, not the last. We strongly support President Biden’s renewed call to Congress to enact stronger gun safety legislation that includes banning high-capacity assault weapons and magazines.

Our primary areas of expertise are children’s learning, mental health, and safety, and their intersections with effective school-based mental health services. We’ve worked for decades to increase access to school mental health and behavioral services. Violence prevention is not the primary goal of these services, but it is an undeniable benefit in terms of prevention, intervention, and recovery related to acts of violence. We value the Biden Administration’s attention to the importance of strengthening and expanding our mental health infrastructure and the critical role of schools and school mental health professionals and the significant investments approved by Congress to engage in this work. But this is not enough.

While we must address mental health in this country, we won’t end gun violence if we don’t also address our gun problem. A reduction in gun violence—and the resulting safety in our schools and communities—will only occur when we take serious and meaningful action to eliminate inappropriate access to weapons, enact and enforce safe storage laws, and eliminate the ability of civilians to own assault weapons and other weaponry that was designed specifically to kill a large number of people in a short amount of time.

We will continue to fulfill our responsibilities to support children’s ability to thrive in school, at home, and in life. We call on Congress to fulfill theirs.
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For guidance and more information, see:

- Talking to Children About Violence
- Responding to School Violence: Tips for Administrators
- Youth Gun Violence Research Summary

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