



## THE ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA NURSE LEADERS' POSITION STATEMENT ON GUN SAFETY

### The Gun Safety Problem

---

Semi-automatic weapons were used to massacre 16 people and injure 31 in 1966 on the campus of the University of Texas in Austin. The number of mass shootings since that date has escalated exponentially, with 498 mass shootings recorded in 2022 alone at the time of this statement, resulting in 544 people killed and 2,039 people injured. **This equates to 2.13 shootings per day according to the Mass Shooting Tracker, and the number literally goes up each day.**

THIS IS A NATIONAL HEALTH CRISIS!

The lack of concern for gun safety in the U.S.—the most developed nation in the world—is a significant problem, as evidenced by:

- American women are 16 times more likely to be shot and killed than women in other developed nations.
- Firearms are the second-leading cause of death for American children and teens.
- Black Americans are 10 times more likely than white Americans to die by gun homicide.
- LGBTQ hate crimes are on the rise, with half of the victims being killed by firearms.
- A young Native American commits suicide with a gun every six days in the United States.

Gun safety legislation has proven effective in other countries that choose their citizens over personal gain and corporate profits. There is an opportunity to learn from the successes of these countries, while focusing on humanity and on those who reside in the United States of America.

### The Role of Nurses in Gun Safety

---

We dedicate our lives to healing individuals and communities, and ensuring the health of our neighbors, friends, and colleagues. Our Nursing Code of Ethics under Provision 3 requires us to “**promote, advocate for, and protect the rights, health, and safety of the person**” and under Provision 8 “collaborate with other health professionals and the public to **protect human rights**, promote health diplomacy, and reduce health disparities.” We decry the unethical profiteering from military grade weapons sales that kill our citizens.

California nurse leaders support a **total ban** on assault weapons, limitations on civilian access to high-capacity weapons and ammunition magazines, measures that control the sale and use of firearms (such as universal background checks for all gun purchases), laws to criminalize gun trafficking, proposals to set a more appropriate minimum age for gun ownership, and a “bump stocks” ban.

We support legislation closing loopholes and increasing background checks for purchases by people between the ages 18 and 21; enhanced background check processes and up to a three-business-day investigative period for buyers under age 21; and we will support legislation that promotes universal background checks for all gun owners.

We support red flag laws that allow groups to petition courts to remove weapons from people deemed a threat to themselves or others.

We support providing mental health resources and improving access to crisis intervention services for those in need and encourage early recognition of violence.

We promote education for safe at-home storage of firearms and support quick, robust investigations of imminent violent school threats.

We believe that Americans should be able to safely go to the grocery store, church, and school without having to worry about being shot and killed.

We support the value of human life, and oppose any partisan strongholds that support assault rifle and automatic weapon ownership by the general public.

#### References:

Alliance for Gun Responsibility. (2019, June 3). Gun violence in America. Alliance for Gun Responsibility. <https://gunresponsibility.org/gun-violence-america/>

American Nurses Association. (2015). Code of ethics with interpretive statements. <http://www.nursingworld.org/MainMenuCategories/EthicsStandards/CodeofEthicsforNurses/Code-of-Ethics-For-Nurses.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2021, May 5). Firearm violence prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html>

Mass Shooting Tracker (2022). <https://massshootingtracker.site/data/?year=2022> Retrieved 8/21/2022