



POSITION STATEMENT ON GUN SAFETY

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' and silencer bans.

Semi-automatic weapons were used to massacre 16 and injure 31 people in 1966 on the campus of the University of Texas at Austin. The number of mass shootings since that date has escalated exponentially. In 2023, this equated to **2.14 shootings per day** according to the [Mass Shooting Tracker](#), and shooting events are now almost daily, with 301 shootings in the first 8 months of 2025.

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 prioritize their citizens' safety over personal gain and corporate profits. We can learn from the successes of these countries, with a focus on protecting human life.

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.

We support legislation that closes loopholes and increases background checks for purchases by individuals between the ages of 18 and 21, as well as an enhanced background check process and a period of up to three business days for investigative purposes for buyers under the age of 21. We will also support legislation promoting universal background checks for all gun owners.

ACNL supports:

- “Red flag laws” that allow groups to petition courts to remove weapons from people deemed a threat to themselves or others.

- Access to mental health resources, training for early recognition of violent behavior, and improved access to crisis intervention services for those in need.
- Education for safe at-home storage of firearms and quick, robust investigations of imminent violent threats.
- Up-to-date mass shooting data collection that is published in the public domain.
- We believe that all people in the United States should be able to safely go to the grocery store, church, and school without having to worry about being shot and killed.
- The value of human life and oppose any partisan strongholds that support assault rifle and automatic weapon ownership by the public.

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