

The NC Gun Violence Prevention Coalition recognizes the urgency of responding to the horrors of school shootings. These seemingly endless tragedies often defy understanding and can push us to seek quick solutions to resolve highly complex problems.

For certain, we need action now. Action that is comprehensive, well-reasoned and sustained. We believe that the 2018 recommendations of the General Assembly's Select Committee on School Safety are an important first step in addressing safety in our schools. These recommendations are however only a first step. We strongly urge the leadership of the General Assembly to continue the work of the Select Committee in the 2020 "short session" and beyond. We are following the work of the 2020 Select Committee and are hoping that they will continue to prioritize the safety of children and educators.

In response to the threat of gun violence in our schools we support the following:

- Limiting the carrying of firearms on school grounds (including college campuses) to qualified, fully trained, law enforcement/security professionals, such as School Resource Officers (SRO) only and in sufficient numbers to properly cover all North Carolina public schools. We do not support arming educators in our schools and colleges, nor do we support college students carrying on campus.
- Standardizing the training of SROs to ensure that all SROs are properly and consistently trained for the unique role they play in schools. We encourage school administrators to implement clear lines of responsibility between staff and SROs in handling disciplinary matters. We also support the development and expansion of programs such as Teen Court and restorative justice practices, as an effective problem-solving alternative to more traditional student disciplinary practices.
- We strongly believe that a critical deterrent to school shootings is early identification of warning signs of behaviors that could signal future acts of violence. Warning signs that must then be followed up by responsive intervention. To that end, we support increased funding to expand counseling, nursing and school psychologist staffing. Additional funding

should also be made available to school districts to create and sustain statewide anti-bullying and Mental Health First Aid for youth programs as essential elements of a supportive, proactive infrastructure designed to identify and deter the potential for violence.

- We support Extreme Risk Protection Orders. Such laws allow family members and law enforcement to petition the court to confiscate firearms from someone deemed a danger to themselves or others. Such laws represent an important component of responsive intervention to warning signs of violence.

- A study of 37 school shootings in 26 states found that in nearly two-thirds of the incidents, the attacker got the guns from his or her home or that of a relative. Deterring gun violence in the school, therefore, must extend beyond the boundaries of school property to the community and the home. We support the creation and expansion of programs that engage and educate parents, guardians, and all adults who supervise youth about the importance of gun safety in the home and the far-reaching impact unsafe practices can have on children at home as well as in school. We also encourage parents and other responsible adults to always ask about the presence and safe storage of firearms in locations where their children visit and play.