

# 2022

# ALLIANCE FOR GUN RESPONSIBILITY

## POLICY AGENDA

*Washington state cannot afford to press pause on gun violence prevention. In the face of the continued challenges posed by the pandemic, a contentious political atmosphere, and record-levels of gun violence, the Alliance for Gun Responsibility is prioritizing protecting and building on our recent progress to support a comprehensive public health approach to preventing gun violence.*

**Protect Progress and Continue Momentum:** The financial, social, and political reality of the continued health crisis means that it is more important than ever to protect and build on the strides we've made to prevent gun violence in Washington state. This includes closing dangerous loopholes, continuing to align victim protection processes, strengthening our Voluntary Waiver program, creating real accountability for the firearm industry, and increasing funding for public education and community intervention programs through the Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention.

**Close Dangerous Loopholes to Keep Communities Safe:** Washington's comprehensive background check system helps keep firearms out of dangerous hands. Two important loopholes in the current system must be closed:

- There are no limitations on access to high-capacity magazines—devices which make semi-automatic firearms extraordinarily deadly by allowing a shooter to fire a large number of bullets in a short period of time. Prohibiting sales of magazines that carry more than 10 rounds will help save lives by keeping these lethal accessories out of dangerous hands.
- Ghost guns—untraceable, homemade firearms—allow people to circumvent background checks by purchasing components and assembling firearms at home. Current Washington law prohibits the manufacture, sale, or possession of undetectable firearms but doesn't address untraceable homemade guns. We must update existing law to close this deadly loophole.

**Protect Free Speech from Firearm Intimidation:** The open carrying of firearms in politically-charged or contentious environments greatly increases the possibility of deadly violence and produces a chilling effect on First Amendment rights to freedom of speech. In 2021, the legislature took a big step forward by prohibiting open carry at the Capitol, protests, and demonstrations. Extending this safeguard to public meetings, special polling places, and ballot counting locations is a commonsense step that will help reduce the risk of more political violence by firearm in Washington state.

**Protect and Expand Community-Based Programs and Public Education:** Washington has made notable progress in dedicating resources to community-based gun violence prevention work. We need to build on that progress by greatly expanding funding for the Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention to ensure it can support on-the-ground work in communities most disproportionately impacted by gun violence. In addition, we need meaningful investments in public education efforts about safe storage practices and Extreme Risk Protection Orders and we must ensure our schools are an excellent source of information about the risks of firearms.

**Establish Real Accountability:** For years, federal law has shielded the gun industry—dealers and manufacturers—from nearly all accountability for the danger and damages their products cause. This means that the costs of gun violence are borne almost exclusively by victims and taxpayers. Creating real accountability for the gun industry by requiring microstamping and smart-gun technology and enabling accountability through Washington’s Consumer Protection Act creates a path to hold the industry and gun owners to higher standards.

**Address Inequitable and Biased Policing:** Washington passed an historic package of police accountability legislation in 2021. Together, these bills make much-needed changes that will reduce police violence, increase accountability and transparency, set clear guidance for law enforcement, and improve access to justice. It is crucial that we protect, refine, and build on these policies in close collaboration with BIPOC communities to ensure they are working as intended.

