

# INVEST IN GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

We, the undersigned organizations representing thousands of gun violence survivors, parents, students, teachers, health care and public health professionals, faith leaders, and concerned citizens, urge you to invest a minimum of \$15 million in the Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention this year.

We cannot afford to wait to dedicate significant funding to statewide gun violence prevention efforts. Since the start of the pandemic, gun violence has surged in Washington. Early data suggests that 2021 will surpass 2020's record-breaking levels of gun injury and death. The same communities that have been hit hardest by the pandemic—BIPOC and lower income communities in particular—have also borne the brunt of the gun violence epidemic.

As our state charts a path forward, it is essential that the newly-established Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention is sufficiently funded. This office is tasked with, among other things, conducting research and public education and allocating funding for community-based violence prevention programs. Dedicating \$15 million for the Office now will ensure that its critical violence prevention work can proceed and that much-needed funds make it to community programs.

Over the last year, many cities and states have dedicated significant funding to similar offices or efforts. In December, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam included \$27.4 million in his outgoing budget to establish a Center for Firearm Violence Intervention and Prevention that would be tasked with collecting and reporting data on gun violence and supporting community-based organizations. In Michigan, Governor Gretchen Whitmer announced a \$30 million investment in a range of community violence prevention initiatives. Washington can and should follow suit with an investment of its own in this lifesaving work.

By voting to create the Office in 2020, Washington established itself as a leader in supporting a public health and community-centered approach to gun violence prevention. In order to remain a leader and to reduce senseless violence in our communities, the state must allocate significant funding to the Office. Most urgently, the Office's community-based violence prevention support and public education efforts require significant funding.

The Office of Firearm Safety and Violence Prevention will serve the essential role of helping identify the root causes of gun violence and enabling the leaders and organizations with the experience and expertise to address it. Our elected leaders must ensure that this office is adequately funded so that it can carry out its vital mission.



## **SINCERELY,**

*#ENOUGH: Plays to End Gun Violence*

*Alliance for Gun Responsibility*

*CHOOSE 180*

*Civic Action*

*Community Passageways*

*Edmonds Chapter of Alliance for Gun Responsibility*

*El Centro de la Raza*

*Faith Action Network*

*For The Culture Counseling Services*

*Grandmothers Against Gun Violence*

*Immanuel Presbyterian Church Tacoma*

*Institute for Black Justice*

*Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle*

*Latino Civic Alliance*

*Moms Demand Action for Gun Violence Prevention*

*Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane*

*Pro-Choice Washington*

*Public Health - Seattle & King County*

*Resilient In Sustaining Empowerment*

*Safe and Sane Skagit*

*Skagit County Democrats Party*

*The Brady Campaign To Prevent Gun Violence*

*Thurston Gun Sense*

*United Church in University Place*

*Wallingford Indivisible*

*Washington CeaseFire*

*Washington Chapter of the AAP*

*Washington Education Association*

*Washington State Coalition Against Domestic Violence*

*Washington State Public Health Association*

