



PEACE AND JUSTICE NETWORK
Presbytery of Grand Canyon

Gun Violence—Background Check Legislation April 2021

The Background Checks Act of 2021 (HR 8) to make it unlawful to sell or transfer a firearm without a background check and also the Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2021 (HR 1446) to provide more time for the background check system to make a final determination on a potential sale were passed in the US House of Representatives as HR 8 and HR 1446 in March 2021.

Senate votes on these are imminent. The Faith Church Peace/Justice/Mission Committee is sharing information from the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship. Here are some quotes from PPF and other partners:

“With your action, federal legislation to prevent gun violence has a chance to pass both houses and be signed into law for the first time in a generation.”

“Background checks aren’t about taking guns away or burdening legal gun owners — they’re about ensuring that people who shouldn’t have guns can’t buy them from a total stranger selling a gun at a gun show or online with no background check and no questions asked.”

Read the bills here: <https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/8/text>
<https://www.congress.gov/bill/117th-congress/house-bill/1446/text>

The Faith Church Peace/Justice/Mission Committee urges those with an opinion about these bills to contact senators as soon as possible to try to make a difference.

For Arizonans, this can be done by calling or emailing
Senator Kyrsten Sinema (202) 224-4521
317 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
Online contact---- <https://www.sinema.senate.gov/contact-kyrsten>

Senator Mark Kelly (202) 224-2235
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510
Online contact-----<https://www.kelly.senate.gov/>

And/or call **202-224-3121**-an operator will connect you with the office of your Senator

Want to Do More?

Pray for your senators. Share this information with your church, social action committee, Sunday School class, family, neighbors, friends. Set a goal to reach 5 or 10 or more to encourage them to make phone calls and online contacts to their senators (doing both phone and online-or-mail is suggested). Thank you.

The PCUSA denomination has a long history of calling for controls on gun sales, beginning in 1968 at the 108th General Assembly, following the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr.

Based on overtures from presbyteries across the nation, the GA called for federal regulation of all gun sales and to restrict certain types of guns designed to kill large numbers of human beings. The GA took such gun violence prevention actions in 1976, 1981, 1985, 1988, 1990, 1998, 1999, 2000, 2008, 2010. We are told that the PCUSA has never called for limits on hunting or on rifles used in hunting or sports shooting.

In 2014, the 219th General Assembly sent a major report to the churches: *Gun Violence, Gospel Values*. This report called for the Presbyterian Office of Public Witness and Presbyterians everywhere to “Work with Legislators... to ensure that all persons buying guns at gun shows undergo a background check [and] close the gun show loophole in the thirty-five states where it remains open.”

In 2019, the PCUSA established a Gun Violence Prevention Ministry and employed the Rev. Deanna Hollas of Texas as its coordinator. Rev. Hollas works with the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship and others to help our nation take positive steps toward reducing and eliminating gun violence.

This month Rev. Hollas and many other Presbyterians partnered with the Road Trip for Background Checks. Along seven different routes nationwide, a bipartisan group of volunteers, gun violence survivors, gun owners, veterans, faith leaders, and elected leaders traveled more than 16,000 miles and made more than 75 stops in 23 states to decorate and sign a mural—and to collect personal stories, photos of loved ones killed by gun violence, and letters to Congress. The mural and messages were driven or delivered from stop-to-stop, state-to-state, over ten days, and on April 15, they were assembled in Washington D.C. and delivered to senators in a socially distanced press conference to call on the US Senate to support Background Checks.

Act now. Time is short. Faith Church P/J/M: Karen Wahlund, chair; Betty Forsberg, Shirley Barr, Helen Lee, Sang Lee, Jan Mattson, Marsha Malsack, Sara Mitchell, Rev. Sheryl Campbell, pastor liaison.