



UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH OF ARLINGTON VIRGINIA

A Place to Connect, Grow and Serve

March 7, 2018

WHAT IS VOICE DOING ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE?

[VOICE](#) (Virginians Organized for Interfaith Community Engagement) has been working with our sister organizations across the country for several years in a unique campaign to make a permanent difference in gun violence. The key to our strategy is *economic pressure*.

The campaign, called *Do Not Stand Idly By*, is employing both market pressures (“pull”) and investor persuasion (“push”) to get manufacturers and distributors to make serious changes. From the voices of urban community leaders, police officials, and safety experts, our organizing leaders heard a consensus: that far fewer guns in America will end up in crime or accident scenes if (1) gun dealers can meet high standards of security and transparency and (2) the marketplace demand for child-proof, theft-proof guns (with “smart gun” fingerprint technology) can be accelerated. The campaign has been working with key players, from large investors to police chiefs, to build pressure across the country for these changes. You can check out the details here: <http://donotstandidlyby.org/>

Progress to date: Two years ago, our campaign persuaded then-President Obama to issue baseline standards for federal government purchases of smart guns. As of today, 123 cities are now represented, through the supportive positions taken by mayors, police chiefs, and others, on our twin goals. Most recently, BlackRock, the world's largest asset fund manager, informed the major gun makers it partly owns that it expects them to reform their practices in line with *Do Not Stand Idly By*. You can read more about that in a **New York Times** story that came out just this week:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/04/nyregion/when-the-dollar-is-mightier-than-the-gun.html>

The gun epidemic did not arise overnight and will not be fixed overnight. But VOICE and our many sister organizing coalitions are in this for the long haul.

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