

# SAMPLE LETTER FOR (STATE) LEGISLATORS

Dear (State) Legislators,

Thank you for the work you do on my behalf as representatives. Last month, we all grieved for the lives of 10 citizens of Buffalo, New York, and then 19 children and two teachers killed at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas. And now, we witness even more such carnage in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

We shared that grief as Republicans and Democrats. You likely know that since January 1, 2022 there have been 27 shootings at schools across America, and as of this writing, 229 shootings with four or more victims.

Our state legislature has united around solving major problems in our state in the past. You've worked across the aisle to do what was in the best interest of our state. I'd like to ask that you work across the aisle, Republicans and Democrats, to reduce the likelihood of violence against children as we saw in Uvalde, Texas, this last week, and against civilians of all ages in places too many to count.

I know you are a person of faith who cares about our state's people and children. Please express your faith now, by taking concrete action to protect them, and to overcome this impasse.

To that end, I write to encourage bi-partisan efforts to reduce school shootings focused on:

## **Expanding Mental Health Access:**

- Please increase investments in mental health services and raise the gun ownership age to 21.

**Responsible Gun Storage:** The largest number of gun deaths each year are suicides, often with young adults using guns owned by their parents. In addition, children find guns and inadvertently harm themselves.

- Please pass legislation requiring guns be stored with a trigger lock in place. This will help prevent the needless deaths and the misuse of parents' guns by children.

**Licensure and Training:** Permit laws are the single most effective way to reduce gun violence. States with permit laws of any kind have less gun violence than those without.

- Please reinstate or expand licenses and training requirements to own a gun.

**Background Checks:** Background checks are among the easiest laws to thwart through private party sales, straw man sales, gun shows and trading of weapons.

- Please pass universal background checks for all gun purchases, trades and transfers.

You have the power, as legislators, to leave a legacy of safer schools and communities, and better policies to protect the lives of our children. I'm pleading with you to please act.

Sincerely,

Rev. Timothy J. Smith

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