

Unitarian Church in Summit

Policy Statement on the Prevention of Gun Violence

We, the members of the Unitarian Church in Summit, reaffirm and build upon our denomination's historic stand against gun violence. Gun violence runs counter to our basic principles, desecrating the inherent worth and dignity of human life and extending throughout the interconnected human community.

Both the tragic frequency of mass shootings and the loss of more than 90 Americans per day from gun violence require us to stand by our principles. We will speak out broadly, and we will work together to bring about both legislative and cultural changes to prevent this violence.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the members of the Unitarian Church of Summit hold accountable our elected representatives to enact and support these state and federal laws to prevent gun violence:

- **Require universal background checks for all gun purchases, including sales via the Internet and at gun shows, with supporting laws to ensure rapid and accurate processing.**
- **Prohibit possession of firearms by those who are a risk to the community, to others, and/or to themselves,** as determined by background checks, mental health authorities and/or legal authorities.
- **Enact reasonable restrictions on high-rate-of-fire capability ("semi-automatic") weapons and (high-capacity) magazines,** which enable shooters to quickly kill many.
- **Hold gun manufacturers accountable** for 1) producing reliable firearms that will not discharge after removal of the clip, and 2) disseminating safe handling and storage practices.
- **Create and maintain a federal data base on incidents of gun violence** to collect comprehensive data and use that data to educate citizens and policy makers to enable them to make informed and rational decisions about guns and gun safety.

Further, the members of the congregation shall suggest to our town and other governmental public safety officials, who account for 40% of firearms sales, that they use their significant gun-purchasing power to leverage change in the firearms industry. Public officials who purchase firearms with taxpayer dollars should ask gun manufacturers to develop "safe-gun technology," maintain a distribution network that excludes dealers who sell to criminals, and assist police in fighting gun trafficking.

We also will strive to change cultural attitudes towards gun safety. These efforts may include a public display outside the church; education of the wider community through events hosted by our congregation and others; curriculum changes in public schools to educate children at age-appropriate levels about: gun safety, peaceful conflict resolution, and suicide prevention; and interfaith coalitions to work on these issues in community and public policy forums.

Together we embrace these efforts to save lives and reduce injuries, and recognize that by thus defending our principles, we act on our mission to heal the world.