

Dear Co-Chairs Latz and Mohamed and Members of the Gun Violence Prevention Working Group,

Minnesota PTA thanks you for the opportunity to submit written testimony on the urgent issue of gun violence prevention. For more than 128 years, PTA has spoken to protect every child with one voice, guided by the belief that every child and youth has the right to live free from violence and fear, and to be safe in their schools, homes, places of worship, and communities.

PTA has long recognized that gun violence is a public health and safety crisis that deeply affects children, families, and schools. Our association has adopted resolutions and position statements calling for common-sense, evidence-based policies that prevent children's access to firearms, strengthen safe storage, limit weapons that endanger public safety, and ensure schools have the resources to create safe and supportive learning environments.

Here in Minnesota, that commitment to every child is carried forward in roughly 200 schools with active PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations). Some of our PTAs also have students as members. Parents, caregivers, educators, students, and community members across our state are sharing passionate messages to us and on social media every day that advocate for building safe and welcoming schools. These messages carry the concerns and anxieties of all who worry about gun violence in their schools and communities, and they are united in calling for change.

Gun violence is now one of the leading causes of death among young people. Families should not have to fear that sending a child to school or to a friend's house for a playdate puts them in danger. We cannot wait any longer, and we hope you all support a special session. Minnesota PTA urges the Working Group to study and advance measures that reflect PTA's long-standing positions:

- **Ban semi-automatic military-style assault weapons** designed for rapid, high-volume fire.
- **Ban high-capacity magazines** that allow dozens of rounds to be fired without reloading, increasing the scale of tragedy.
- **Provide resources for enforcement and public education** so families and communities understand and comply with new laws.
- **Strengthen safe storage / child access prevention requirements** so firearms are secured in homes, protecting children from accidental or intentional harm.

These steps are practical, responsible, and needed now to prevent future tragedies. They reflect PTA's steadfast commitment to the safety and well-being of every child.

Thank you for your leadership in convening this working group and for centering the safety of Minnesota's children. Minnesota PTA remains steadfast in our commitment to protect children from gun violence, and we urge you to act with the urgency this crisis demands.

Sincerely,

Joanne Barkmeier

Vice President

Advocacy Commissioner

Minnesota PTA

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