

February 13, 2024

Dear Senator Baker,

As Catholics, we value the dignity of every human life, and yet in our country which proclaims “life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness” for all, lives are taken tragically and needlessly through gun violence every day. The statistics from Everytown USA present a sobering reality. As of February 2023, communities across America suffered 200 firearm casualties daily with 120 resulting in firearm deaths.¹

Suicides, homicides, and mass shootings shatter the peace and security of residential and rural communities in cities both large and small at a rate 26 times higher than other high-income nations.² Schools, Houses of Worship, and Grocery Stores seek to add layers of protection in places that once were considered safe and secure. More troubling, the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States is now firearms.³

Although there is public support for gun violence legislation, in many states, including Pennsylvania, there is no heart among our legislative leaders to listen to the voices of their constituents and there is no will to make the necessary changes happen.

Two Bills are currently waiting to be scheduled for a hearing in the Pennsylvania Senate by the Judiciary Committee: H.B. 1018 Extreme Risk Protection Orders and H.B. 714 Universal Background Checks. Neither of these two bills is an infringement on responsible gun ownership. In fact, any responsible gun owner would want to see some guardrails put into place that would protect the lives of innocents and loved ones.

We are asking you to reflect on your faith and how it calls all of us to cherish our own lives and the lives of those with whom we live, work, and play. Senator, please schedule the hearing on these two Bills: H.B. 1018 and H.B. 714. These Bills will make all Pennsylvanians a little safer.

Sincerely,

¹ Everytown Research & Policy, “Gun Violence in America,” Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 13 February 2023, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>.

² Everytown Research & Policy, “Gun Violence in America,” Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 13 February 2023, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>.

³ “Statistics,” Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Accessed 11 January 2024, <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/>.

Sisters,

Please sign this letter individually in your convent and then send it in the mail to:

Senator Lisa Baker
Senate Box 203020
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3020
Room: 173 Main Capitol

Senator Baker is the chair of the Judiciary Committee. She is a Catholic and will not schedule a hearing in the Senate on these two bills. She represents counties around Scranton. Thank you! Joyce