



## EDMOND DEMOCRATIC WOMEN POSITION ON THE PREVENTION OF GUN VIOLENCE

The members of Edmond Democratic Women (EDW) are committed to preventing future violence in America's schools. EDW supports the "Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America" (attached). The members join their voices with the authors of this document to recommend policy-makers take a public health approach to protecting children and adults from gun violence. This approach includes three levels of prevention:

1. Universal approaches promoting safety and well-being for everyone;
2. Practices for reducing risk and promoting protective factors for persons experiencing difficulties; and
3. Interventions for individuals where violence is present or appears imminent.

EDW believes Oklahoma legislators should promptly draft legislation that addresses these priority items:

1. Require all schools to assess school climate and maintain physically and emotionally safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment and assault.
2. Pass a ban on assault-style weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips, and products that modify semi-automatic firearms to enable them to function like automatic firearms.

As you review the attached Call to Action you will note that this is just the beginning, but it is a very holistic approach to finding a cure for the epidemic of violence spreading through our schools and our communities. PLEASE consider these well researched suggestions to make Oklahoma a safer place to live and raise a family.

**Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America**  
**Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence**  
**February 28, 2018**

School shootings and widespread community gun violence are far greater in the United States than other nations. America cannot be great and realize its promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness if our children are not safe from gun violence.

Although security measures are important, a focus on simply preparing for shootings is insufficient. We need a change in mindset and policy from reaction to prevention. Prevention entails more than security measures and begins long before a gunman comes to school. We need a comprehensive public health approach to gun violence that is informed by scientific evidence and free from partisan politics.

A public health approach to protecting children as well as adults from gun violence involves three levels of prevention:

- (1) universal approaches promoting safety and well-being for everyone;
- (2) practices for reducing risk and promoting protective factors for persons experiencing difficulties; and
- (3) interventions for individuals where violence is present or appears imminent.

On the first level we need:

1. A national requirement for all schools to assess school climate and maintain physically and emotionally safe conditions and positive school environments that protect all students and adults from bullying, discrimination, harassment, and assault;
2. A ban on assault-style weapons, high-capacity ammunition clips, and products that modify semi-automatic firearms to enable them to function like automatic firearms.

On the second level we need:

3. Adequate staffing (such as counselors, psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers) of coordinated school- and community-based mental health services for individuals with risk factors for violence, recognizing that violence is not intrinsically a product of mental illness;
4. Reform of school discipline to reduce exclusionary practices and foster positive social, behavioral, emotional, and academic success for students;
5. Universal background checks to screen out violent offenders, persons who have been hospitalized for violence towards self or others, and persons on no-fly, terrorist watch lists.

On the third level we need:

6. A national program to train and maintain school- and community-based threat assessment teams that include mental health and law enforcement partners. Threat assessment programs should include practical channels of communication for persons to report potential threats as well as interventions to resolve conflicts and assist troubled individuals;
7. Removal of legal barriers to sharing safety-related information among educational, mental health, and law enforcement agencies in cases where a person has threatened violence;
8. Laws establishing Gun Violence Protection Orders that allow courts to issue time-limited restraining orders requiring that firearms be recovered by law enforcement when there is evidence that an individual is planning to carry out acts against others or against themselves.

Congress and the executive branch must remove barriers to gun violence research and institute a program of scientific research on gun violence that encompasses all levels of prevention. We contend that well-executed laws can reduce gun violence while protecting all Constitutional rights.

It's time for federal and state authorities to take immediate action to enact these proposals and provide adequate resources for effective implementation. We call on law enforcement, mental health, and educational agencies to begin actions supporting these prevention efforts. We ask all parents and youth to join efforts advocating for these changes, and we urge voters to elect representatives who will take effective action to prevent gun violence in our nation.

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For more information go to: <https://curry.virginia.edu/prevent-gun-violence>