**Urgent: Tell our Senators to vote to Reduce Gun Violence**

Every day in the U.S. nearly 350 people still are shot, and almost 100 die in gun violence (34 from murder, 59 by suicide). That adds up to over 124,750 people shot and 35,000 killed by gunshot in the U.S. every year. Those numbers should be unacceptable to all.

As Christians we are called by scripture to transform a society marked by violence into one of peace. Make it clear to your elected officials that they must **act NOW to pass more stringent legislation on firearm sales, background checks, and waiting periods.**

The Senate is expected to vote next week on the “Bipartisan Background Checks Act” ([HR 8](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick.everyaction.com%2Fk%2F45958194%2F348219215%2F-2141328267%3Fnvep%3Dew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMi8xLzY0MDYyIiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImIzYTc1Nzg1LTE2ZTEtZWMxMS1iNjU2LTI4MTg3OGI4NTExMCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAiZ2F5bGV3b29kczU5NjRAbXNuLmNvbSINCn0%253D%26hmac%3DVgfJr2KVNC5aPlqnDBSKBJ5ydXi9GzKlRvQmZuFePq8%3D%26emci%3De964fada-d3e0-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26emdi%3Db3a75785-16e1-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26ceid%3D2714056&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ceb081340511c403f492608da433a8181%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637896215797390443%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wSXYA48hzaf3yr6iy7TQipt3bxvGluF2lhcmpor518Q%3D&reserved=0)) and the “Enhanced Background Checks Act” ([HR 1446](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick.everyaction.com%2Fk%2F45958196%2F348219220%2F1338837048%3Fnvep%3Dew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMi8xLzY0MDYyIiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImIzYTc1Nzg1LTE2ZTEtZWMxMS1iNjU2LTI4MTg3OGI4NTExMCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAiZ2F5bGV3b29kczU5NjRAbXNuLmNvbSINCn0%253D%26hmac%3DVgfJr2KVNC5aPlqnDBSKBJ5ydXi9GzKlRvQmZuFePq8%3D%26emci%3De964fada-d3e0-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26emdi%3Db3a75785-16e1-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26ceid%3D2714056&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ceb081340511c403f492608da433a8181%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637896215797390443%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2BMDJxrkEuuT1q9jweGDZw4BtOBPrnhxjaVOkDKh4PiI%3D&reserved=0)) which would strengthen background check procedures for those purchasing firearms. Both bills have already passed in the House.

Currently, 22% of all guns sold in the U.S. are purchased through unlicensed and private sellers without a background check. These bills would close that loophole, which currently allows people who are ill-advised or barred from buying and owning guns to go around the national background check system.

These bills would also increase the wait time for firearms purchase. Studies suggest that waiting period laws can reduce gun homicides by 17% and firearm suicide rates by up to 11%.1 The United Methodist Church calls on its congregations to advocate at the local and national level for universal background checks as part of our call to pursue “the reality of God’s dream of shalom” in Micah 4:1-4. (United Methodist [Book of Resolutions, 3428](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick.everyaction.com%2Fk%2F45958197%2F348219221%2F1211418747%3Fnvep%3Dew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMi8xLzY0MDYyIiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImIzYTc1Nzg1LTE2ZTEtZWMxMS1iNjU2LTI4MTg3OGI4NTExMCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAiZ2F5bGV3b29kczU5NjRAbXNuLmNvbSINCn0%253D%26hmac%3DVgfJr2KVNC5aPlqnDBSKBJ5ydXi9GzKlRvQmZuFePq8%3D%26emci%3De964fada-d3e0-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26emdi%3Db3a75785-16e1-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26ceid%3D2714056&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ceb081340511c403f492608da433a8181%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637896215797390443%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uMSqhbXaEhMc2s9OXHv%2BhTRFfyrhrI%2F2LMiU7EBkK%2B8%3D&reserved=0))

**As a first step in addressing the scourge of gun violence,**[**tell your senator**](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick.everyaction.com%2Fk%2F45958198%2F348219222%2F-239101479%3Fnvep%3Dew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMi8xLzY0MDYyIiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImIzYTc1Nzg1LTE2ZTEtZWMxMS1iNjU2LTI4MTg3OGI4NTExMCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAiZ2F5bGV3b29kczU5NjRAbXNuLmNvbSINCn0%253D%26hmac%3DVgfJr2KVNC5aPlqnDBSKBJ5ydXi9GzKlRvQmZuFePq8%3D%26emci%3De964fada-d3e0-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26emdi%3Db3a75785-16e1-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26ceid%3D2714056&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ceb081340511c403f492608da433a8181%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637896215797390443%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=JcOJmoYCwOQuhW1EYGHnQZKnBmxXsprt3vIM8tZ68YU%3D&reserved=0)**– pass background checks now!**

[1] Michael Luca, Deepak Malhotra, and Christopher Poliquin, “Handgun Waiting Periods Reduce Gun Deaths,” Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences 114, no. 46 (2017): 12162–12165

Church and Society
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Washington, DC 20002
United States

**Here’s a sample letter/message:**

Dear Senator (Crapo or Risch),

As I’m sure you know, every day in the U.S. nearly 350 people still are shot, and almost 100 die in gun violence (34 from murder, 59 by suicide). That adds up to over 124,750 people shot and 35,000 killed by gunshot in the U.S. every year. Those numbers should be unacceptable to all and particularly to people of faith.

As a Christian, and as a United Methodist, I am called by scripture to transform a society marked by violence into one of peace. Therefore, I strongly believe that Congress must act NOW to pass more stringent legislation on firearm sales, background checks, and waiting periods, at the very minimum.

You will likely have the opportunity to vote next week on the “Bipartisan Background Checks Act” ([HR 8](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick.everyaction.com%2Fk%2F45958194%2F348219215%2F-2141328267%3Fnvep%3Dew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMi8xLzY0MDYyIiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImIzYTc1Nzg1LTE2ZTEtZWMxMS1iNjU2LTI4MTg3OGI4NTExMCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAiZ2F5bGV3b29kczU5NjRAbXNuLmNvbSINCn0%253D%26hmac%3DVgfJr2KVNC5aPlqnDBSKBJ5ydXi9GzKlRvQmZuFePq8%3D%26emci%3De964fada-d3e0-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26emdi%3Db3a75785-16e1-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26ceid%3D2714056&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ceb081340511c403f492608da433a8181%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637896215797390443%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=wSXYA48hzaf3yr6iy7TQipt3bxvGluF2lhcmpor518Q%3D&reserved=0)) and the “Enhanced Background Checks Act” ([HR 1446](https://nam12.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fclick.everyaction.com%2Fk%2F45958196%2F348219220%2F1338837048%3Fnvep%3Dew0KICAiVGVuYW50VXJpIjogIm5ncHZhbjovL3Zhbi9FQS9FQTAwMi8xLzY0MDYyIiwNCiAgIkRpc3RyaWJ1dGlvblVuaXF1ZUlkIjogImIzYTc1Nzg1LTE2ZTEtZWMxMS1iNjU2LTI4MTg3OGI4NTExMCIsDQogICJFbWFpbEFkZHJlc3MiOiAiZ2F5bGV3b29kczU5NjRAbXNuLmNvbSINCn0%253D%26hmac%3DVgfJr2KVNC5aPlqnDBSKBJ5ydXi9GzKlRvQmZuFePq8%3D%26emci%3De964fada-d3e0-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26emdi%3Db3a75785-16e1-ec11-b656-281878b85110%26ceid%3D2714056&data=05%7C01%7C%7Ceb081340511c403f492608da433a8181%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637896215797390443%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2BMDJxrkEuuT1q9jweGDZw4BtOBPrnhxjaVOkDKh4PiI%3D&reserved=0)) which would strengthen background check procedures for those purchasing firearms.

Currently, 22% of all guns sold in the U.S. are purchased through unlicensed and private sellers without a background check. These bills would close that loophole, which currently allows people who are ill-advised or barred from buying and owning guns to go around the national background check system. These bills would also increase the wait time for firearms purchase. Studies suggest that waiting period laws can reduce gun homicides by 17% and firearm suicide rates by up to 11%.1. It’s a first step.

I am called, as a follower of Christ, to advocate for justice and peace. Supporting universal background checks are part of the call to pursue “the reality of God’s dream of shalom” in Micah 4:1-4.

Please vote YES on these two pieces of legislation.

It’s more impactful if you reword this so it’s not so obviously “cut and paste.” I often find that when I sit down to do this, the words come. If you don’t even want to reference the two bills, just speak about gun violence in general. It’s critical that those we elect to represent us here our voice even if they ignore it.

Additional talking points:

* Speak as a parent or grandparent
* If you have a personal experience, briefly share that.
* If you are a gun owner, all the better. Speak from that point of view.
* Quote another verse that speaks to you.

The easiest way to contact our Senators is via email. Click on the link and it gives you form to fill out. You can just copy what you write to one and paste it on the other’s form. Quick and easy.

James Risch: <https://www.risch.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/email>

Mike Crapo: <https://www.crapo.senate.gov/contact/email-me>