



A Racial Justice Framework for Talking About Gun Violence and School Safety

Gun violence cuts deeply across all our communities. Limiting access to guns is the first and most direct step we can take to protect *all* young people.

- On average seven children die EVERY DAY from gun violence in this country.¹
- The rate of gun-related deaths was six times higher for children of color in 2016.²
- More than half of all gun-related deaths in the U.S. are children of color.²
- The majority of gun deaths in the US are suicides and LGBTQ community is over-represented among suicide victims.³ Lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth are four times more likely to attempt suicide than straight youth, and 92% of transgender adults have attempted suicide by age 25.⁴

“Hardening” our schools since Columbine has failed to keep guns out of schools or keep students safe. Instead tougher security measures, such as zero tolerance policies or putting police in schools further discriminate against and criminalize students of color.

- Schools that have majority students of color are two to eight times more likely to have enhanced surveillance, screening, and random searches than majority white schools *with higher disciplinary offenses*.⁵
- The presence of school security guards or assigned police officers at schools have jumped dramatically since the Columbine massacre. Yet there have been 200 school shootings since then.⁶
- Black and Latinx students are punished more harshly and frequently than white students *for the same behaviors*. More than 50% of students involved in school-related arrests or referred to law enforcement are Black or Latinx.⁷
- U.S. Department of Education’s Civil Rights Office data revealed that Kern County school district in central California was suspending and expelling Black students at a rate 500% higher than White students, and Latinx students at a rate of 380% higher.⁸ The district also allows school personnel to be armed.

¹ Gun Violence by the Numbers:

https://everytownresearch.org/gun-violence-by-the-numbers/?source=etno_ETHomePage&utm_source=et_n_&utm_medium=_o&utm_campaign=ETHomePage

²Fatal Injury Reports, National, Regional and State, 1981 – 2016 <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate.html>

³ <http://www.gaysagainstguns.net/about>

⁴ <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/preventing-suicide/facts-about-suicide/#sm.0000cyd2yo39bd9ps0o197i61egk8>

⁵ Nance, Jason P. “Students, Security, and Race,” <http://scholarship.law.ufl.edu/facultypub/372>

⁶The presence of school security guards or assigned police officers at schools jumped from 54% in 1999 to 70% by 2013

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/2018/02/22/generation-columbine-has-never-known-world-without-school-shootings/361656002/>

⁷ <https://www.cnn.com/2014/01/24/politics/zero-tolerance/index.html>

⁸ <http://doloreshuerta.org/historic-settlement-reached-in-lawsuit-against-kern-high-school-district-72617/>

Genuine school safety begins with creating an environment where *all* students -- regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or citizenship feel welcomed, safe and supported. Arm our schools with the resources for school counselors, nurses, and emotional well being programs not with guns and metal detectors.

- Three out of the five largest school districts in the U.S. have more security officers than counselors.⁹
- Students in schools with more counseling services have greater feelings of belonging and safety.

Sample Tweets/Posts

Any of the above messages and talking points can be used as sample posts and tweets. Here are a few more example including potential and current hashtags that you may want to use.

- Increased security detection does not equal more protection. Tougher school security failed to keep guns out; only discriminates against students of color. #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons
- “Tougher” schools equals toughers students. Not more safety. Pushes students out not bring them in. #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons
- Arm our schools with counselors, nurses, wellness programs to support students, not guns and metal detectors. #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons
- More police on school campuses than ever, yet 200 school shootings since Columbine. More police does not = safe schools. #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons
- FBI profile of school shooters are white, male and middle class. But tougher school security hurts kids of color the most. Why do we pay the price? #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons
- Nurses, counselors, wellness programs, building healthy relationships create schools where students feel safe and welcomed. #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons
- More welcoming and supportive schools help all students feel safe, not more guns and metal dectectors! #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons
- All students -- regardless of race, gender, sexuality, religion or citizenship -- deserve welcoming, safe and supportive schools. #NeverAgain #WeCanDoBetter #EnoughIsEnough #CounselorsNotCops #SchoolsNotPrisons

YVote (www.yvotca.org) and Mobilize the Immigrant Vote (www.mivcalifornia.org) are statewide networks in California of 30 youth and community organizations building the voting power of young people of color, immigrants and refugees across California.

⁹ <https://www.the74million.org/article/exclusive-data-shows-3-of-the-5-biggest-school-districts-hire-more-security-officers-than-counselors/>