

June 13, 2016

Dear Fellow Americans:

We write to you in shock and grief – and to ask for your help.

Many of you reading this letter know our names. You've opened emails from us, called on our leaders to enact responsible change with us, worshipped with us, wept with us, knocked on doors with us. We have relied on the strength and energy of individual Americans to help achieve the goals we all work toward – from women's rights to civil rights to LGBTQ rights to worker's rights to veterans' rights.

Today, we are coming together not as individuals, but as one voice to condemn the violence and hatred that reared its hideous head in Orlando. We call on the powerful advocates who have known both the debilitation of hatred and the tragedy of gun violence - be it public violence or private, a mass shooting or a stray bullet, murder or suicide - to join with us in condemning the hatred and gun violence that threatens not only our families, but who we are as a country.

We've seen too much in the past twelve months: from Americans murdered at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado, to labor union members killed at a holiday lunch in San Bernardino. Young and old gathered together in prayer in Charleston, only to be gunned down in hate. Women – mothers and daughters and sisters – hurt or killed in a relentless drumbeat of domestic violence made deadly by firearms. And now, LGBTQ Americans, celebrating Pride month in the most joyously American of ways – by dancing – hunted like animals. We know that hatred directed toward a person for one reason today will be hatred directed toward someone else for a different reason tomorrow.

Today, we come together to say ENOUGH, and to pledge to stand together against violence and hatred. Our America is one that, despite the odds, is always moving forward toward a more perfect union, celebrating our differences and from them, building strength. We celebrate each other's labor, love, and patriotism, and together we believe that we have a responsibility to leave a country for our kids and grandkids that is more fair, more just, and safer.

Whether you are young or old, white or black or Latino or Asian or Native American, working in a factory or a field or a call center or a hospital or an elementary school, whether you go to church or temple or a mosque or nothing at all, we are all Americans. We stand for diversity that makes us stronger, and for a belief that we can make our country safer.

It is not written in our Constitution that we must live in fear of each other and of troubled individuals with guns. We can do better. Some states have already made progress – they show us that when we put aside our incidental or

momentary differences and stand shoulder to shoulder, we have enormous power.

A famous scholar said hope was made of two powerful ingredients: anger at how things are, and the courage to change them. We will not be driven backwards to live in isolation from one another and in fear of violence. And together, with millions of Americans who share our values of pluralism, liberty, and neighborly care, we will stand strong and work toward a safer nation for all of us.

Sincerely,

Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, Co-Founder, Americans for Responsible Solutions

Nihad Awad, National Executive Director, Council on American-Islamic Relations

Lee Bantle, President, Friends Against Violence Everywhere

Mark Barden, Managing Director, Sandy Hook Promise

Leah Gunn Barrett, Executive Director, New Yorkers Against Gun Violence

Margot Bennett, Executive Director, Women Against Gun Violence

Robyn Fryer Bodzin, National Co-Chair, Rabbis Against Gun Violence

Cornell Brooks, President & CEO, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People

Rea Carey, Executive Director, National LGBTQ Task Force

Kathy Ko Chin, President & Chief Executive Officer, Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum

Sarah Clements, Co-Founder, Georgetown Against Gun Violence

Rabbi Menachem Creditor, National Co-Chair, Rabbis Against Gun Violence

John Feinblatt, President, Everytown For Gun Safety

Anne Galland, Executive Director, MoveOn.Org Civic Action

Kim A. Gandy, President & CEO, National Network to End Domestic Violence

Lily Eskelson Garcia, President, National Education Association

Mark Glaze, President, Campaign To Unload

Ruth M. Glenn, Executive Director, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence

Chad Griffin, President, Human Rights Campaign

Dan Gross, President, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence

Zoe Grover, Executive Director, Stop Handgun Violence

Lori Haas, Virginia State Director, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence

Mary Kay Henry, International President, Service Employees International Union

Nicole Hockley, Managing Director, Sandy Hook Promise

Ilyse Hogue, President, NARAL Pro-Choice America

Renée Hopkins, Executive Director, Alliance for Gun Responsibility

Joshua Horwitz, Executive Director, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence

Mara Keisling, Executive Director, National Center for Transgender Equality

Kate Kendell, Executive Director, National Center for Lesbian Rights

María Teresa Kumar, President & CEO, Voto Latino

Kevin Jennings, Executive Director, Arcus Foundation

Sharon J. Lettman-Hicks, Executive Director & CEO, National Black Justice Coalition

Aisha C. Moodie-Mills, President & CEO, Victory Fund & Institute

Marc Morial, CEO, National Urban League
Janet Murguía, President & CEO, National Council of La Raza
Po Murray, Chairman, Newtown Action Alliance
Rabbi Jonah Dov Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism
Jennifer Pinckney, Clementa Pinckney Foundation
Katie Ray-Jones, CEO, National Domestic Violence Hotline
Cecile Richards, President, Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Dara Richardson-Heron, M.D., CEO, YWCA USA
Laura Ricketts, Chair of the Board, LPAC
Kristin Rowe-Finkbeiner, Executive Directors, MomsRising
Lee Saunders, President, American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees
Stephanie Schriock, President, EMILY's List
Eileen Soffer, National Coordinator, Rabbis Against Gun Violence
George Takei, Founder, One Pulse for America
Neera Tanden, President & CEO, Center for American Progress
Robyn Thomas, Executive Director, Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence
Ken Toltz, Founder & Co-Chair, Safe Campus Colorado
Shannon Watts, Founder, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America
Randi Weingarten, President, American Federation of Teachers
Lori Weinstein, CEO, Jewish Women International
Julia Wyman, Executive Director, States United to Prevent Gun Violence
Brent Wilkes, National Executive Director, League of United Latin American Citizens

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