

Friends Council on Education

January 14, 2013

To: President Obama, Vice President Biden, and our nation's policy leaders

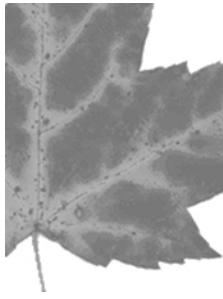
From: The Board of Directors of the Friends Council on Education, an association of Friends schools in the United States with affiliates around the world

As educators in Quaker schools, we abhor violence of any kind, and especially when it is directed towards children. We support President Obama's plea that now is the time for meaningful action on the issue of reasonable and rational gun safety legislation. For the good of all school children and adult citizens in America, we ask you to ensure our right to live as a free democratic community, which is what our forebears intended when they wrote the Second Amendment: *A well regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.*

We ask you to pass legislation that supports free and safe communities, the essential core of our founders' purpose, protecting our nation's democracy. Too often today guns are used to enforce one individual's will on others through violence. We ask you to take urgent action now to ensure that current and future generations may live and learn in schools, colleges, universities, and all public gathering places in our country free from the threat of gun violence. The issue of gun safety is the one educational issue that prevents thousands of young people from living lives of promise and realizing their dreams in a free country. [Note: Among the world's 23 wealthiest countries, 80% of all gun deaths occur in the United States and 87% of all children killed with guns are killed in the United States, *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery*.]

As the Board of Directors of Friends Council on Education, we represent school leaders, teachers, trustees and parents, Republicans, Democrats and Independents. As a group, we do not oppose gun ownership. We do oppose recent legislation that would allow private citizens to possess guns in public places where there are children. We urge you to ensure the long-term safety and security of our children and adult citizens by abolishing access to the kinds of guns that are never appropriate for civilized use. As educators and parents, we join college presidents across the country in asking our elected representatives and the administration to act collectively on behalf of our nation's children by enacting rational gun safety measures, including:

- Ensuring the safety of our communities by opposing legislation that mandates guns on our campuses and allows guns in our classrooms.
- Ending the gun show loophole, which allows for the purchase of guns from unlicensed sellers without a criminal background check. Instant background checks are essential in identifying people with histories of mental illness.



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- Repealing the Tiahrt amendments that require information on background checks to be destroyed within 24 hours of approval, and that limit the ATF from tracing information on firearms linked to crimes, information on gun sale transactions and dealers' license violations and suspensions, and that limit the ATF from working with local and state law enforcement agencies through sharing information.
- Reinstating the ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines.
- Requiring consumer safety standards for all guns and regulations to identify, prevent and correct manufacturing defects.

Most importantly, we request that you pass legislation that ensures our founders' original intent, returning our focus to the importance of building strong, safe and healthy communities where everyone is free to live and pursue education. We can move our nation ahead by building educational curricula with a focus on inclusion, collaborative thinking, social-emotional skill development, democratic decision-making and nonviolent conflict resolution.

We request that you take action now so that current and future generations may live and learn in a safe, democratic country free from the threat of gun violence.

Sincerely,

Darryl J. Ford, PhD, Clerk, Board of Directors

Irene McHenry, PhD, Executive Director

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