

Resolution
NFTY Responds to Gun Violence: Part I
Mechina 5774, June 20, 2014

Background: The prevalence of violence has been a growing epidemic in the United States since the Columbine High School shooting in 1999. and the 2011 shooting of Congresswoman Gabby Giffords. The December 2012 shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut brought this issue back to the forefront of worldwide partisan and nonpartisan conversation. Gun violence has become a serious epidemic in our country, and despite the national - and even worldwide - attention, little has changed legislatively. We often let fear of ruffling feathers prevent us from truly taking action toward making our world a safer place. We still see far too many tragedies due to gun violence and must take action as a movement.

WHEREAS there have been 74 shootings in schools alone since the Newtown tragedy and;

WHEREAS there have been more than 70 mass shootings since January 2011, including the recent shooting in Overland Park, Kansas, targeted at the Jewish community and;

WHEREAS if the current trend of gun violence in our country continues, 30,000 Americans will be shot to death this year--one-third being homicides, and two-thirds suicides, and;

WHEREAS gun violence has caused the greatest loss of life in the United States, per year, since any war since World War II, and;

WHEREAS President Barack Obama has issued 23 executive actions since the Sandy Hook shooting, and has also created a new campaign called "Now is the Time" in January of 2013, and;

WHEREAS less than a month ago, President Obama stated, "There's no advanced, developed country that would put up with this," (in regard to gun violence) and;

WHEREAS the Reform Movement has long recognized the need for legislation “that would limit and control the sale and use of firearms” and has called on the United States government to “eliminate the manufacture, importation, advertising, sale, transfer and possession of handguns except for limited instances,” and;

WHEREAS the Reform Movement has participated in both Gun Violence Prevention Sabbath Weekends along with nearly 1,000 houses of worship throughout the United States and;

WHEREAS Our Jewish tradition emphasizes the sanctity and value of every human life and;

WHEREAS Mishnah Sanhedrin teaches us that “he who takes one life it is as though he has destroyed the universe and he who saves one life it is as though he has saved the universe” and;

WHEREAS NFTY, as an entire movement has not done enough regarding this issue because we have been focusing too much on the guns and not the people and communities who have been hurt, killed, and terrorized by them;

THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED that NFTY must commit itself to pursuing ways of inspiring our membership to activate around this issue that has caused too much pain and anguish in our society; and,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that each of NFTY’s 19 regions will find an engaging way to memorialize and commemorate those affected by gun violence in their region; and,

LET IT BE FURTHER RESOLVED that each region will create and participate in one or more of these experiences by NFTY Convention 2015.

Respectfully Submitted,

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