Minute on Gun Violence from Northern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

Approved in NYM Annual Session meeting for business on 5/29/2022.

We call on all Friends to denounce the prevalence of gun violence and work to heal our communities though true, peaceful fellowship. We have crafted the following minute to share with our elected officials as one action we can take, following the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. This minute intentionally does not endorse specific legislative goals. Friends are urged to send this minute to their senators and representatives with a letter stating the gun safety recommendations that they feel are needed.

As Quakers from Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa, Michigan and North Dakota gather for our Annual Meeting on Memorial Day weekend 2022, our hearts are broken by the killing of 19 children, two teachers, and a young man barely older than his victims in Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, and the racially driven murder of ten people at a Buffalo New York grocery store the week before. We hold everyone affected by these attacks in the healing Light of God. While such mass shootings grab the headlines, the much greater gun violence toll from daily individual acts of domestic violence, retribution, suicide and accidents receives little attention.

For over 300 years, peace and non-violence have been at the center of our witness as a religious body. We know that we live in a society that glorifies guns as symbols of power, manliness, and rebellion. We also know that gun violence will only truly end when we can touch and heal the broken hearts of those who feel that shooting people is a heroic or necessary act, or is the only way to get attention.

Research shows that most of the death and injury from gun violence can be prevented if we are willing to act, and act we must, in many ways. We call on our state and national legislators to pass meaningful legislation to reduce access to guns. We call for an increase in access to counselling, social services, and mental health care to support the prevention of these violent acts. We call on all citizens to work for the cultural change necessary to end the allure of gun violence.