

Miscellaneous Information: legis.state.pa.us Good website for PA Districts and Names of Senate and House Members

Example: District 4 ~ Senator Art Haywood (D) Montgomery Co (Part) & Phila. Counties (Part)
District 154 ~ Representative Napoleon J. Nelson (D) Montgomery County

Date _____

Senator/Representative's Name

My name is _____ and I am a Sister/Associate/Employee of (Religious Organization) and a member of the national Coalition of Nuns Against Gun Violence. [Would it be wise to share how many states and/or congregations we represent?] I am also your constituent and a resident of (enter your city).

In light of my Catholic faith, every year I observe the season of Lent. For 40 days prior to Easter, I and other Catholics engage in practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving as we prepare our whole selves for the coming celebration of Easter.

This year, in partnership with the national Coalition of Nuns Against Gun Violence, I will be participating in a fast to end gun violence in our nation. (specifically go into what your fast is, if you wish). In the Book of Isaiah, the prophet describes what an acceptable fast is for God: *"Is not this the fast I chose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?"*

Isaiah 58:6

For too long we have been struggling in our local communities with the yoke of gun violence. The toll gun violence takes on our communities is staggering with **120 firearm deaths and 200 more wounded** per day. [1] Death by suicide, homicide, and mass shootings ravage our communities at rates **26 times higher than other high-income nations**. [2] Troublingly, the **leading cause of death of children and teens in the United States is now firearms**. [3] Yet as a nation, we seem to be afraid of taking decisive action to prevent these deaths from happening.

More specifically, I am deeply concerned with the state of gun violence in my home state of Pennsylvania. **Eighty% of PA voters said they support gun safety reforms**. [4] According to Cease Fire PA's website Pennsylvania has weaker gun laws than many of the neighboring states, and has failed to enact many commonsense laws and policies. [5]

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For example, the PA State House passed two bills in May 2023:

HB 714 to establish Universal Background Checks
HB 1018 to create Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO)

After 200 days since these two bills passed there was no movement from the Judiciary Committee of the Senate to discuss the bills let alone bring them to the floor of the Senate. After the **Not One More Day** campaign was held by Cease Fire PA on December 14, 2023, (the 11th Anniversary of Sandy Hook) there was still no movement. And as of March 4, 2024, after 287 days, the violence continues causing untold loss of life, traumatic injuries, and grief. [5] When will the PA legislators finally realize that protecting individual rights and the gun lobby over the common good is killing us and our children? In truth, 1,600 Pennsylvanians lose their lives to gun violence each year!

For these reasons and more, I am fasting to raise awareness and urge lawmakers like you to listen to those who are suffering from gun violence. **I urge you to do something** to change the narrative and to prevent more tragedies from occurring, and to join me and many others, in creating a world where gun violence is no longer the norm.

Prayerfully,

[1] Everytown Research & Policy, "Gun Violence in America," Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund,

13 February 2023, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>

[2] Everytown Research & Policy, "Gun Violence in America," Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund,

13 February 2023, <https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>

[3] "Statistics," Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Accessed 11 January 2024, <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/>.

[4] The Third Way, Polling of Pennsylvanians took place on June 21, 2022, Accessed 24 January 2022, <https://www.thirdway.org/>

[5] CeaseFirePA, NOT ONE MORE DAY Campaign On-line videos, 04 March 2024, <https://www.ceasefirepa.org/>