

Burlington School Board Resolution Related to Action on Gun-Related Violence Prevention

February 24, 2018

Whereas, gun related violence at American public schools and in other public spaces, including mass shootings have become an every day occurrence;

Whereas firearms are the 3rd leading cause of death of children 17 and younger in the United States due to homicide, suicide and accidental shootings;

Whereas, our children and schools in Vermont are not immune to such gun-related violence including mass shootings, as evidenced by marking the 10-year anniversary of the Essex School shooting, the recent thwarting of a plan for a mass shooting at Fair Haven High School;

Whereas, Vermont school children spend increasingly more time participating in lock-down and active shooter drills (now more common than fire drills), detracting from time spent on critical classroom learning and invoking significant anxiety and fear among students and teachers that impedes learning;

Whereas, all Vermont students have the right to attend school and live in a community free from the fear of death or injury as a result of gun-related violence;

Whereas, all Vermont teachers and staff have the right to a working environment free from the fear of death or injury as a result of gun-related violence;

Whereas, parents have the right to live in a community and send their children to a school in which they have confidence in their children's physical, psychological, and emotional safety;

Whereas, we are local elected officials charged with ensuring the education, health, and safety of students on behalf of parents and our community, and therefore cannot accept the status quo that allows virtually unfettered access to guns in our State and results in these guns being used to kill and maim children;

We, the Board of the Burlington School District, declare it resolved that our elected officials in the Vermont House and Senate must pass effective gun violence prevention legislation during the 2018 legislative session, and that Governor Scott must sign such legislation into law to take effect immediately;

Four relevant pieces of legislation are currently before the VT House or VT Senate: S.6 related to universal background checks; H.422 related to removing guns from the scene of a domestic violence crime; S.221 related to enabling law enforcement officers to get an order to remove guns when a person shows signs of threat and danger; and H. 876 related to prohibiting bump-fire stocks for firearms. We urge careful consideration of these and similar bills;

In addition, we urge the drafting and passage of legislation that would prevent the possession, sale, or manufacture of military-style "assault weapons," require loaded guns in homes to be kept out of the hands of children, and increase the age (currently 16) at which it is legal to purchase a gun without parental permission;

With gratitude to the students of Vermont who have spoken out on this issue, we make this resolution in support of their voices. We urge our legislators to immediately and swiftly act to keep our children alive.