



Deep Faith. Courageous Spirit. Action for Justice.

2016 IHM MONTHLY MOBILIZATION TO ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE

BACKGROUND

We need look no further than the daily news to be confronted by the devastating effects of gun violence on our society. When a headline grabbing mass shooting occurs we are all impacted by the heartbreaking news. However many more people we may never hear about are also the victims of gun violence.

- More than 30,000 Americans are killed by homicides, suicides and incidental killings each year.
- Another 70,000 are injured by firearms annually.
- One child or teen dies from a gun every 3 hours and 18 minutes, making gun violence the second leading cause of death in youth ages 1-19.*

In 2013, Recalling the thirtieth anniversary of the murder of John Clement Hungerman, IHM, the Coordinating Council proposed that: "between the fiftieth anniversary of the assassination of President Kennedy (Nov. 22) and the first anniversary of the murders of the children at Sandy Hook Elementary School (Dec. 14) we, the IHM Sisters, take deliberate public actions against gun violence in our society." In the past two years the IHM Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office has sponsored annual public prayer services and vigils, hosted educational presentations, drafted statements and letters in the name of the IHM Leadership Council and periodically urged members to e-mail or call Michigan and federal legislators.

However, as the epidemic of gun violence in the United States continues to escalate, movement on meaningful gun violence prevention legislation has been slow. In many cases the nationwide trend has been toward weaker gun laws. While the President took a strong first step in the right direction by issuing a series of executive actions designed to reduce gun violence, he reiterated that, "Congress still needs to act." As groups across the country continue to work on behalf of gun violence prevention, an interest in sustained advocacy on this issue has surfaced among IHM Sisters and Associates. In response, the IHM Justice, Peace and Sustainability Office is launching a monthly gun violence advocacy campaign.

OUTLINE

1. The request for action will be sent out in the JPSO Weekly Announcement on the first Thursday of each month beginning Thursday, Jan. 7, 2016.
2. National action priorities will include some of the common sense proposals identified in the Dec. 12 New York Times editorial, [Despair Over Gun Deaths Is Not an Option](#) as well as action requests from our trusted organizational allies (Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence, Network Catholic Social Justice Lobby, the Brady Campaign etc.) Among these proposals are universal background checks, restoring the assault weapons ban and funding for gun violence research.
3. Actions in the Michigan legislature will be based upon the priorities outlined by the [Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence](#), of which the IHM congregation is a member.



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4. During months when there is no specific action to request, members will be asked to send a general message reiterating their support for meaningful action to address gun violence or thanking their legislators who have already done so.
5. Standing tools will be created and posted on [IHM Gun Violence Resource Page](#) including:
 - Contact information for federal and state legislators
 - Information on where legislators stand on gun violence (based upon their voting record.)
 - General statistics and talking points on gun violence
 - A page of quotes (from Pope Francis, MLK, etc.) related to gun-violence
 - Prayer resources
6. Participants will be invited to register each month's action with JPSO.
7. JPSO will work make each month's action accessible the IHM Motherhouse Community.
8. JPSO will occasionally notify members of and/or coordinate face-to-face advocacy when important opportunities arise.
9. IHM Sisters and Associates are welcome to invite friends and groups beyond the IHM Community to join these efforts. Organizational allies of JPSO will also be invited to participate.
10. JPSO will make this campaign the focus of the 2016 IHM Armchair Activism Mobilization efforts.
11. Any questions about this campaign can be directed to Sarah Nash snash@ihmsisters.org or Elizabeth Walters, IHM ewalters@ihmsisters.org.

RATIONALE

This mobilization is being initiated with the IHM Congregation's Chapter 2000 Direction on, "*Active and Collaborative Response to Escalating Violence*," in mind. This reads "Recognizing the escalation of violence in our world, and especially its impact on women and children, we choose to act with diligence in the pursuit of peace and non-violence."

* Michigan Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence.