

# VALUES AND POSITIONS OF THE OHIO COALITION AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE



OHIO COALITION  
AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

2022

## ABOUT OCAGV

*The mission of the Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence is to prevent gun violence through education, advocacy and public awareness.*

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence has been advocating against gun violence since 1995. OCAGV has been specifically advocating for common-sense policies designed to reduce gun violence, while also opposing legislation that could increase the danger to our families or unfairly target individuals based on race or ethnicity – and ensuring awareness on the issues of gun violence.

OCAGV was founded by Toby Hoover, a gun violence survivor, and Reverend Marty Donnelly as a volunteer committee focused on gun violence. OCAGV became an independent non-profit organization in 2002.

OCAGV has served as a resource for legislators; educators, schools and students – including those writing high school or college level papers or otherwise doing projects on gun violence; community organizations; survivors of gun violence; events of remembrance, national and other state coalitions and more.

## **OUR VALUES...**

### **OCAGV is committed to ending gun violence:**

- It is not our role to approve or disapprove of gun ownership
- It is our responsibility to explain the risks of having a gun
- We respect the legal rights of all people

### **Further, OCAGV believes injury and death from a gun can be reduced by:**

- Educating the public on the increased risks of having a firearm in the house or carrying them in public
- Reducing availability and access to firearms
- Holding gun owners legally responsible for their weapons, use and sales, especially if any child has access to them

## OCAGV does not:

- Engage in debate on the Second Amendment as it has never been ruled to be absolute and therefore allows regulation in the interest of community safety
- Judge hunters or hunting
- Make broad statements approving of hunting weapons
- Support gun ownership or concealed carry as ways of making individuals, families or communities safer

Then



Now



**U. S. Supreme Court - rights are not absolute**



### Choose a Safer Ohio

Support regulating guns in public  
Support background checks on all gun sales  
Support keeping schools gun free  
Support child access prevention laws

Ohio does **NOT** have these needed laws:

- Registration or Licensing
- Permit to purchase
- Background check on private sales
- Assault weapon/large capacity clip control
- Purchase restrictions to one-gun-a-month
- Mandatory waiting period to purchase
- Requiring childproof guns
- Child access prevention

Every gun in the hands of a child must first pass through the hands of an adult !

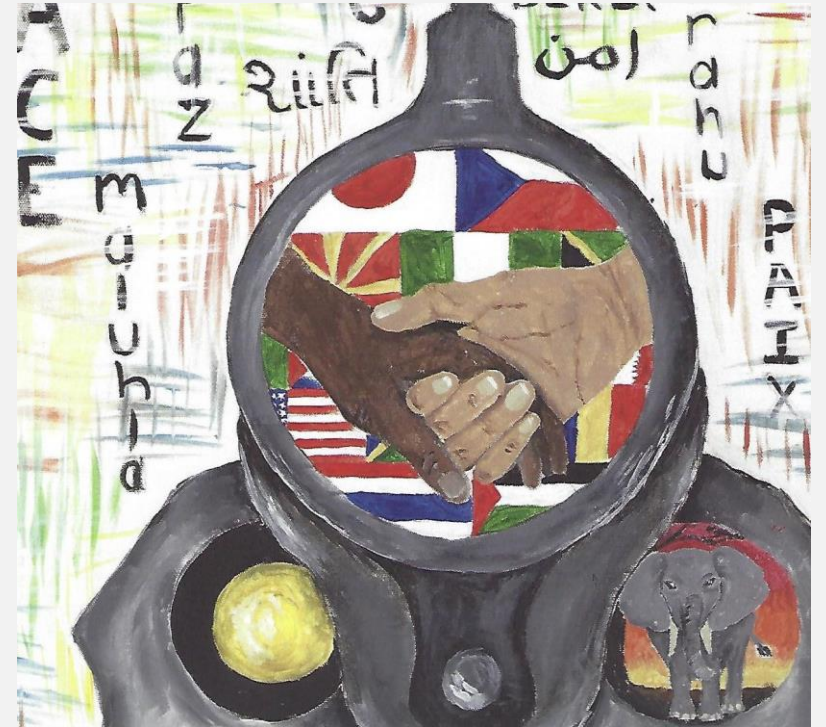
# OCAGV POSITION STATEMENTS

## Racism

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence abhors violence of all forms and against all peoples. Statistics and shared lived experiences confirm to us that People of Color are disproportionately killed by guns. We stand against racism directed at all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). History shows us the systemic inequities and countless incidents perpetrated against unarmed Black, Asian-American, and other people across the country who, because of their skin color, are often perceived as a threat. OCAGV encourages all Americans to come together in unity and a shared desire to see an end to violence, discrimination, and hateful and inciteful rhetoric throughout our state and our country.

## Equality and Equity

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence is committed to reducing gun violence by supporting equality and equity. While we are all created equally, we are not all treated equally and with equity. We endorse funding and activities designed to educate, enhance understanding of social injustice, create a deeper acceptance of diversity – whether it be race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities or other identities – and a deeper awareness of mental health issues. We urge law enforcement to be educated as “peace” officers, practice non-violence and provide safety for all persons.



## **Armed Staff in Ohio Schools**

Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence's mission is to keep families safe. Our primary concern is our children. Over the years, we had a number of educational programs teaching kids what to do if they see a gun, if their friends are talking about using a gun to hurt themselves or others, and listening to them tell us about their experiences – and what they want to see happen to stop gun violence. They have always told us they want peace and non-violence, and so do we. OCAGV opposes the Ohio law that allows guns to be carried in schools with permission of the school board. The information is kept secret from parents, teachers and other staff, as well as the community. Currently, legislators are considering reducing the training required for the people they allow to carry weapons.

Allowing minimally-trained staff or volunteers to carry a concealed weapon into a school perpetuates the culture of violence and normalizes the behavior that as adults they will need to be armed. OCAGV believes trained resource officers should be the only ones armed around our children. An officer that is familiar to the children, all school personnel and parents and is accountable to the law enforcement agency that they work for is a safer environment and a far better example for our children. Years ago, OCAGV heard a doctor ask *“When are we going to make our children more important than our guns?”* We continue to ask that question and remain committed to putting our children first because they are the most important.



Temporarily remove firearms  
from the home of  
an individual at  
immediate risk of  
harming themselves or  
others.

## **Suicide**

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence is saddened that suicide continues to be one of the leading causes of death in America – and that firearms are the most common method of suicide. Suicides occur across all ages, races, and socioeconomic groups. Mental health experts state that most individuals considering suicide try to talk to someone about such thoughts before they attempt suicide. We all need to listen to our loved ones, especially in times of emotional turmoil and uncertainty. We believe that preventing access to firearms will help deter suicide attempts. The heartbreak and devastation of suicide by a loved one can be harder to bear if the person died because of easy access to a gun in the household. We implore all gun owners to keep firearms away from loved ones, including children and those who may be experiencing mental anguish and emotional despair – and safely secure their unloaded firearm(s) in locked storage cases with ammunition stored separately.

# WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT ...

## Gun laws in Ohio

*OCAGV supports gun bills that are intended to reduce gun violence and help keep Ohioans safe in their homes, on the streets, in schools, places of worship and within public buildings.*

*We oppose proposed legislation and existing gun bills that do not to protect our citizens – and that would increase access to and use of guns; restrict or prohibit law enforcement from doing their job safely; and endorse a sense of “secrecy” through allowing unlicensed concealed carry and other unsafe practices.*

*We continue to oppose the carrying of guns whether they are hidden or carried openly.*

*We support the regulation of assault type weapons and large capacity magazines as they can and do take lives at a numerous rate of speed which allows for the mass shootings we have witnessed across the country.*

## Access to guns

*We believe guns should be accessible ONLY to those persons who have been well-trained, have undergone a background check in accordance with a local, state or federal law designed to regulate use, and ensure competence to have a gun and be trained sufficiently. Further, we believe in safe storage practices which include locked storage of an unloaded gun, out of the hands of children and also away from those with physical or emotional disabilities.*



## Gun homicides & suicides

*A CDC report released in May 2022 indicates that the number of gun homicides in 2020 was the highest in 25 years, stating “Homicides from gun violence increased among people of every age, in most racial groups, for men and women, in cities and in rural areas, and in every region of the nation.” We believe that this is in large part due to the ease of access to firearms in Ohio and across the country. We believe that militia-type firearms such as assault rifles or high-capacity firearms should be prohibited.*

*In Ohio, five people die from suicide every day – and one youth dies from suicide every 33 hours. **But did you know?** Guns are the most common means for suicide in Ohio and across the country – and guns kill more people through suicide than homicide. We believe in safe and locked storage of all firearms and that removing the lethal means of a gun in the home from access by a vulnerable adult or child can save a life.*

## Carrying a gun for self-defense

*OCAGV believes laws such as carrying loaded weapons in public and Stand Your Ground increase, not reduce, gun violence – and that allowing the use of deadly force with a gun for self-defense is reckless and dangerous. Fear and perceived danger distorts decisions to use force. We ask what was the perceived danger in the shooting of Ahmaud Arbery by two armed white men who chose to follow an unarmed black man out for a run one morning?*

## **A changing culture**

*We believe that change needs to come from each of us – starting with common sense and responsible actions from legislators and governing officials who should be more committed to ensuring the safety and protection of those they serve, rather than appeasing the gun lobbyists and gun industry overall. We are dismayed at the actions of those legislators who have so readily helped turn today’s society into one that seems to embrace and legitimize the carrying of a gun in public as easily as one would carry their cell phone. We believe we each need to be part of the solutions by taking a stand against violence and acknowledging that access to weapons promotes a culture of violence.*

## **Anger and fear – and their relationship to gun violence**

*High emotions such as anger and fear can often feed and fuel gun violence – among gangs, in domestic abuse, through instances of bullying, and even from social media platforms where someone feels they have been “dissed” online for the whole world to see. Access to guns simply serves to make it easier to fight reactively than figure out a solution proactively.*

## **Action**

*Advocacy, education and prevention are actions we can all take with our families, in our neighborhoods, and with our faith communities. Only share information that comes from a credible resource. None of us are exempt, we are all in this together. Speak up for respect of every person and non violence. Share the suicide prevention hotline with anyone that is in distress 1-800-273-8255.*

# ORGANIZATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Over the years, OCAGV has been integral to delaying and stopping passage of some gun bills and successful in passing some local laws. Efforts included Concealed Weapons, Stand Your Ground, Preemption, and Guns in Schools.

- Postponed the passage of the concealed carry of weapons (CCW) law for nine years
- Added numerous requirements to the CCW law before it passed
- Engaged 17 cities and national groups to sign on to two amicus briefs, one on the legality of the law prohibiting CCW in Ohio (we won) and one on preemption of local laws (we lost)
- Passed local ordinances in Toledo, Columbus and Shaker Heights
- Supported and opposed numerous national policies in partnership with our colleagues across the country. Policies include Concealed Carry Weapons (CCW), Assault Weapons Ban (AWB), Background Checks and Guns in Parks
- Polling in 2020 commissioned by the gun violence prevention organizations Brady, Giffords and the Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence shows that an overwhelming majority of Ohio voters support life-saving policies such as extreme risk protection orders and requiring carry permits.

**OCAGV...**

***Advocating for your right to be free from gun violence***

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