

## Our Values: Safe Communities for All

*Together, we can free all people in our country from the threat of violence, especially gun violence, and create a better, safer and more just America. The Catholic Church insists upon every person's intrinsic worth, dignity, and right to live in safety—no matter the color of our skin, how we worship, or who we love.*

### Ban the use of AR-15s and other weapons of war

#### Current Reality

- The National Rifle Association (NRA) buys influence in Congress to relentlessly thwart common-sense gun safety policies that would save lives. They do this so their gun manufacturer members can sell more guns and make more profits.
- The NRA and their allies in Congress also stoke animosity, pitting Black, Brown, and white people against each other—so that we fear each other, buy more guns, and make them richer. They then spend our money buying even more political influence.
- Meanwhile, gun violence affects every person in America, undermining our collective sense of safety and freedom. Every day, more than 120 people in the U.S. are killed by guns, twice as many are shot and injured, and countless others are impacted by gun violence.
- Many of the deadliest mass shootings in the U.S. have been carried out with assault weapons using large capacity magazines designed for use in war to facilitate mass casualties.
- While federal law requires background checks for gun sales by licensed dealers, this requirement is badly undermined by several loopholes that allow for irresponsible and unsafe sales.

#### Wins

- The 2022 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act provides resources for communities ravaged by gun violence and for school mental health professionals to support student wellness.
- The Biden-Harris administration established the Office of Gun Violence Prevention to develop a national strategy to end the gun violence epidemic.

#### Vision *spread these words!*

- **Together, we will keep our communities safe and ensure our children can go to school safely by...**
  - Making sure all gun dealers sell only to people who have passed background checks.
  - Preventing people who commit domestic abuse from buying firearms.
  - Ensuring gun purchasers have completed background checks before taking ownership of a weapon.
- To keep our communities safe, we will ensure our elected leaders pass the Assault Weapons Ban, which was introduced in Congress in 2023 and which the Biden-Harris administration supports.
  - Research shows that when the assault weapons ban was in effect from 1994 to 2004, it reduced the likelihood of mass shooting fatalities by 70 percent.
  - The several states that have enacted prohibitions on assault weapons and high-capacity weapons experience mass shootings at less than half the rate of states without restrictions.

## Invest in safe communities for everyone, no exceptions

### Current Reality

- The U.S. criminal-legal system has failed to protect all communities equally and justly. For too long, the system has invested in policing and militarization, instead of the programs that create actual safety and stability and address our communities' real needs.
- Some politicians use hateful rhetoric that spurs hate crimes against people based on their race, faith, gender, or sexuality. They do this to divide us, hoping we won't be able to join together and intervene when those politicians try to consolidate power or take away our health care, housing, education, and more.
- Over a dozen states have enacted anti-LGBTQ+ laws that violate our most basic values and freedoms. These laws fuel hatred, and make our communities less safe for everyone.

### Wins

- To implement the 2022 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, the Biden-Harris administration provided community funding to break cycles of generational violence and expand vital mental health services.
- President Biden signed an Executive Order Advancing Equality for LGBTQI+ Individuals after Congress failed to pass the Equality Act.
- The Biden-Harris administration also launched a new LGBTQI+ Community Safety Partnership in 2023 to make our communities safer for all by providing safety training, supporting health care workers, promoting the reporting of hate crimes, and building partnerships to address hate-fueled violence.

### Vision

*spread these words!*

- **Together, we will keep our communities safe** through investing in violence interruption programs, behavioral health treatment, and supportive housing options.
- We will ensure that our young people have access to after-school enrichment, mentorship, and employment opportunities.
- We will ensure that no person—Black, Brown, or white—is targeted by harmful police practices because of the color of their skin or where they live.
- Together, we will protect all people—Black and white, gay and straight, native-born and immigrant—from discrimination to ensure we all have access to employment, housing, credit, education, and more.