

36th LD Democrats Resolution: Enough Gun Violence: Call for Special Session

“...[T]here's an accumulation of sorrow...children are getting, you know, slaughtered in our schools. I mean, and it's not just the kids. Places of worship. People going to country music concerts. We're allowing ourselves to be terrorized by, in essence, by our neighbors.” - Gov. John Hickenlooper (D) -CO, NPR, Feb. 27, 2018

“Our state, and our nation need action against gun violence, and we need it this year.” – Gov. Jay Inslee, (D) -WA @Govinslee Feb 16, 2018

“Unfortunately, students of color are often targeted by police officers and tend to be victims of police violence.” Kaila Caffey, senior at Central High School in Philadelphia, NPR, March 11, 2018, on risk to students of color by arming teachers or other school marshals

“... a deranged sociopath on his way to commit an act of murder in a school knowing the outcome is going to be suicide is not going to care if there's somebody there with a gun. That's their plan anyway.” Mark Barden, Sandy Hook survivor parent on likely effectiveness of arming teachers as a deterrent at White House “Listening Session” Feb 21, 2018

Whereas, momentum for gun violence prevention actions and legislation, both state and federal, is building in response to the accumulation of national sorrow heaped upon us in an intolerable crush of recent mass shootings, including most recently Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, Las Vegas, NV, and far too many others including the heinous slaughter of school children at Sandy Hook Elementary in CT five years ago and Columbine High School in 1999; and

Whereas the Washington State Legislature has responded only feebly to the current gun violence crisis by banning, just barely, bump stocks, but failed to pass several other modest, common sense life- saving gun safety measures, due to unconscionable obstruction by Republican lawmakers a whole, and a few outlier, nominal Democratic lawmakers who continue to carry water for the NRA, which

by this point in history functions mainly as a violence inciting, propagandistic, Putin political funds laundering, effectively domestic terrorist organization;

Whereas it has become increasingly clear over time that unregulated, too easy access to inappropriately powerful guns, such as semi-automatic rifles and pistols by children, and the public at large including unstable individuals, due to cultural, legislative and judicial misinterpretation and willful misrepresentation of, and obsessive over-valuing of the 2nd Amendment, is the driving reason for the United States having a uniquely and appallingly high rate of gun violence, including mass shootings, while most other relatively wealthy countries, including as Australia, Japan, and the UK do not:

1. Therefore, be it resolved that the 36th District Democrats join with the Seattle Public Schools Board of Directors (as expressed in its Resolution 2017/18-17 Supporting Sensible Gun Safety Legislation) in expressing our collective dismay and outrage at this ongoing carnage, and declare our support for:

A. The organized student solidarity events including the recent National School Walkout event that took place Wednesday, March 14, 2018 at 10:00 am in honor of MSD HS, Parkland, FL students; and

B. The upcoming student led and organized Seattle March for Our Lives event, scheduled for 10:00 am, Saturday, March 24, 2018; and

C. Upcoming solidarity activities on the National Day of Action Against Gun Violence in Schools, scheduled for Friday, April 20, 2018; and

2. Be it further resolved that we encourage and demand that Governor Inslee call a special session of the legislature to urgently address the gun violence crises, and pass new legislation *this year* to:

A. Enact a WA state ban on the sale or transfer of military-style assault weapons without further unconscionable delay; and, failing that, meanwhile require universal background checks, attainment of age 21, and a license to purchase a firearm, including assault weapons (provisions of SB6620) until such time as they are banned for civilian use;

B. Push back on misguided proposals to arm teachers and administrators. We believe such proposals would be ineffective as a deterrent, since shooters are often suicidal as well as homicidal, and impractical and counterproductive to stop a shooter in most cases, due to making it unclear to responding “good guys” who the actual shooter is. This is a law enforcement function, not the purview of educators. Moreover, increasing numbers of armed police officers, or other trained “marshals” in schools, including teachers, would likely cause more student harm, particularly to non-white students and staff, than actually increase student safety, due to entrenched implicit and explicit bias toward non-white students.¹ Remove the gun violence threat, rather than harden the “target”. Provide emotional and social supports for those at risk of becoming shooters, but first remove their too-easy access to guns; and

3. Be it further resolved that the 36th Democrats condemns and disavows from the Democratic Party any elected official calling themselves a Democrat, who is supported by, accepts money from, and who supports the destructive agenda of, the NRA, and furthermore we pledge to leverage our considerable influence and resources within the Party to oust such elected officials from office at the next primary election.

Current nominal Democratic WA state legislators who have accepted funding from the NRA, or who have lifetime “A” ratings from the NRA include:

Sen Tim Sheldon

Sen Dean Takko

Sen Kevin Van De Wege

Sen Steve Hobbs

Rep Brian Blake

Rep Pat Sullivan

In addition, Rep Frank Chopp deserves special mention/censure/condemnation as an NRA enabler for refusing to bring SSB6620 to a vote in the House in this last legislative session, though he could have done so, which would have forced

legislators to take a public stand on this critical issue, which voters need to know about in order to provide informed feedback to elected officials by way of voting.

Our US Rep Pramila Jayapal, has recently stated that while all but 8 current Republican House members have taken contributions from the NRA, there are currently 24 nominal Democrats in the US House of Representatives who have taken contributions from the NRA.

¹Nance, Jason P., Student Surveillance, Racial Inequalities, and Implicit Racial Bias (August 27, 2016). 66 Emory Law Journal 765 (2017); University of Florida Levin College of Law Research Paper No. 16-30. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2830885>

Submitted by Brian Duncan, 36th member