



Safe Communities, Safe Schools and Safe Kids Proposal

Policy makers must take action to make our communities and schools safer through common-sense gun safety measures the public overwhelmingly supports. We also must improve access to behavioral and mental health services schools and communities are struggling to provide. The violence we see every day in our country is not inevitable – no other industrialized nation experiences this epidemic of mass shootings and daily gun violence. Given that in an average year 33,000 people die from gun violence, this is an urgent public health crisis.

Instead of spending millions of dollars on a sales tax holiday as proposed by Governor Walker, we propose instead that this money be invested to enhance the safety of our communities and schools through the following policies:

1) Making it harder for dangerous individuals to get access to firearms.

A mass shooting happens almost daily in America, and 88 people die, including 7 children, every day from gun violence. We must make it harder for dangerous individuals, intent on harming themselves and/or others, to get access to firearms. The following are the most critical proposals that should be included in a special session:

- Universal Background Checks (AB 65) – Closes the “no questions asked” loophole and requires background checks at gun shows and for online gun purchases;
- 48-Hour Waiting Period (AB 74) – Restores the waiting period for handgun purchases;
- Lethal Violence Protective Orders (LRB 2543) – Allows a family member or law enforcement officer to petition a court to temporarily remove firearms from a person at risk of harming themselves or others;
- Violent Misdemeanor Purchase and Possession Prohibitions (LRB 5641) – Prohibits individuals convicted of a violent misdemeanor from purchasing or possessing firearms for 10 years; and
- Magazine Capacity Limits (LRB 5666) and Bump Stock Ban (AB 616) – Limits magazine capacity to 10 rounds and bans devices used to convert firearms to automatic weapons.

2) Enhancing school safety measures.

School safety shouldn't be a partisan issue. Our schools need more resources to adopt more rigorous safety measures.

Senate Bill 858, which allows our schools to exceed revenue limits for safety and security measures, should be passed. This would enable our schools to invest in secure technologies, visitor management and identification systems and controlled access among other security measures.



We also support the Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Evers' proposal to:

- Allocate \$24 million to support local solutions to school violence prevention efforts, which could include behavioral supports, conflict resolution and restorative justice, violence prevention curricula, school threat or risk assessments, and emergency preparedness.
- Allocate \$1 million to the existing Wisconsin Safe and Healthy Schools Center to provide guidance to schools on school violence and emergency preparedness.
- Require each school every three years to conduct a safety/security site assessment, which includes updating an emergency operation plan and keeping sensitive school safety information confidential.

3) Supporting access to behavioral health services.

Communities and schools around the state continue to struggle to have the resources to address mental and behavioral health issues. Although the link between mental illness and gun violence is tenuous, we support calls for increased funding for school-based behavioral health services because of the tremendous need. We need to make a more significant investment to address this crisis, including:

- Accepting millions of dollars of Medicaid Expansion monies to extend health care to 79,000 Wisconsinites and save the state \$200 million in taxpayer dollars;
- Adopting Superintendent Evers' recommendations to allocate an additional \$20 million towards expanded school mental health staff including school psychologists, counselors and social workers; increase grant funding to schools by \$10.25 million for integrated community behavioral health services; and \$1.42 million to expand statewide training for school staff and community partners around behavioral and mental health assessments and interventions.

We must do more to keep our communities, schools and children safe. These are some common-sense, comprehensive immediate solutions that must be implemented. The safety of our people and children depend upon it.