



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Kavanagh

State Lawmakers to Parkland, Florida Students: We Hear You, We Support You, and We Will Stand With You to Fight for Laws to Stop Gun Violence

BRIAN KAVANAGH February 20, 2018

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(New York, NY) — In response to brave gun violence prevention activism by students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and from communities across the country, **New York State Senator Brian Kavanagh, Chair of American State Legislators for Gun Violence Prevention**, released the following statement:

“Students from Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School — and students across the country — are standing up, saying that enough is enough, and demanding that their elected representatives take action to stop gun violence. The students' courageous activism during a time of immense grief is incredibly inspiring, and I want them to know that state legislators across the country share their sense of urgency.

“Student-led rallies and protests have rightly focused on the appalling inaction from Washington as we've witnessed one mass shooting after another, as well as the enormous cumulative toll of deaths and serious injuries caused by gun violence that occurs everyday. While some in Congress have fought valiantly for our federal government to respond to these horrors, the President and majorities in both houses of Congress have valued gun industry profits and false rhetoric about constitutional rights over people's lives. This is

unacceptable, and it must end.

"We support these students and the March for Our Lives — and while we join the students in calling for empty expressions of thoughts and prayers to give way to action in Washington, we also know that strong state laws can make our communities safer. That includes background checks on all gun buyers, extreme risk protection orders that keep guns out of the hands of people likely to harm themselves or others, and community intervention programs. We've enacted these and other gun violence prevention laws in many states, and we will continue to do so until every American is protected.

"We want these courageous students to know that state lawmakers hear you, we support you, and we will stand with you. Today, in honor of these students, we are renewing our commitment to fighting for sensible gun laws in state capitals across the country."

Three other members of American State Legislators for Gun Violence Prevention also made statements:

Florida State Representative Lori Berman said: "It is with great sorrow that my South Florida area joins the list of other communities that have suffered an atrocious gun massacre. This horrific pattern cannot be allowed to continue. I have stood with the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas in their mourning period and heard their pleas for action. I have advocated for gun safety issues in the Florida legislature for 8 years and have been largely unsuccessful. To the students, please know that I and many of my colleagues are more adamant than ever that this needs to happen now. Please know that you are heard, you are supported and together we will change the laws to make a true difference."

Kansas State Senator Barbara Bollier said: "We know that extreme risk protection order bills would add a huge measure of protection to our citizenry. If a similar law had been in place in

Florida, the recent shooting could have been prevented. With the inaction of our federal legislators, state leaders are working diligently to bring some common sense anti-gun-violence laws to our states. We MUST move forward to slow this public health crisis."

Texas State Senator Jose Rodriguez said: "In the absence of leadership in Congress, it is heartening to see young people rise up and demand better public policy than arming our schools to the teeth, as the proponents of the 'we need more good guys with guns' or eliminating gun-free zones have offered. One place to start, which should have bipartisan support, is with state laws to temporarily prevent violent or unstable individuals who present an imminent threat from accessing guns."

About American State Legislators for Gun Violence Prevention:

Founded in 2014, American State Legislators for Gun Violence Prevention is an independent, non-partisan coalition of hundreds of Democratic and Republican state lawmakers from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia. Members include elected representatives of urban, suburban, and rural areas who have come together in recognition of the unique role state legislators must play in preventing gun violence.

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