

August 16, 2012

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Governor Mitt Romney
PO Box 149756B
Boston, MA 02114

President Obama and Governor Romney:

As survivors and families of the Virginia Tech shooting, we know the pain of losing a loved one to senseless gun violence. Our hearts go out to Aurora and Oak Creek, and we are keeping the families of the victims and survivors in our thoughts and prayers.

On April 16, 2007, 32 of our mothers and fathers, daughters and sons, and sisters and brothers were murdered by someone who never should have been able to buy a gun. On that day, our lives were shattered, and dozens of young dreams were forever extinguished. Sadly, we are not the only Americans who share this unfortunate bond with the families and survivors of Aurora and Oak Creek. Every day, 34 Americans are murdered with guns in this country. That's more than a Virginia Tech—or three Auroras—every single day.

We remember the words of sympathy that our elected officials had for us in the days and weeks after the shooting. But five years later, our nation's gun laws are still broken, and since the Virginia Tech shooting, more than 60,000 Americans have been murdered with guns. We refuse to be silent as the body count continues to grow.

Both of you have restated your support for the background checks system. We too believe that a comprehensive background check system is one of the best ways to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people, but our current system is broken. In addition to your praise for the concept, we ask that you tell us and the American people how you will fix the system in practice. Do you support requiring a background check every time a gun is sold and ensuring that all records of prohibited purchasers are included in the background check system?

We know firsthand that gaps and flaws in our nation's gun laws allow guns to fall too easily into the hands of criminals and other dangerous people. We know that respect for the Second Amendment can go hand-in-hand with keeping guns away from criminals. We also know that five years after Virginia Tech, millions of mental health records are still missing from the system, which is how the Virginia Tech shooter was able to buy his guns.

So let us remember the victims of Aurora and Oak Creek. And then let us honor their memory by working to prevent the next Virginia Tech, the next Tucson, the next Aurora and the next Oak Creek. Now is the time to fix our nation's broken gun laws, but we need our nation's leaders to tell us the specific steps you will take to prevent more bloodshed.

We stand united as families of the victims and survivors of the Virginia Tech massacre, and with the American people, and demand a plan from you to fix the broken background check system and reduce gun violence.

Sincerely,

Amy C. Agrali	Ellen M. Granata	Alicia Lane
Lynnette Alameddine	Eric E. Granata	Tracey M. Lane
Yvonne Alameddine	Joseph Granata	Jerzy Nowak
Jeri Bishop	Linda Ankenman Granata	William F. O'Neil
Michael Bishop	Mildred Granata	Michael Pohle
Samuel Borchers	John Grimes	Teresa Pohle
Beverly Bluhm	Suzanne Grimes	Harry Pryde
Dennis Bluhm	Channing Haas	Karen Pryde
Alec Calhoun	Emily Haas	Cathy Read
Jim Calhoun	Lori Haas	Peter Read
Daniel P. Carney	Jennifer Herbstritt	Omar Samaha
Jamal Carver	Joseph Herbstritt	Randa Samaha
Letitie Clark	Margaret A. Herbstritt	Joe Samaha
Frederick Cook	Michael Herbstritt	Mona Samaha
Sylvie Couture-Nowak	Stephanie Herbstritt	Erin Sheehan
Patricia A. Craig	Beth Hilscher	Fawnatane Shepherd
Jeanne Dube	Angela Bluhm Jones	Roger Shepherd
Francine Dulong	Justin Jones	Paul Turner
Andy Goddard	Stephanie Loftin	Susan Turner
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