

ASSOCIATION of
JESUIT COLLEGES
& UNIVERSITIES
AJCU

June 23, 2022

U.S. House of Representatives / U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515 / 20510

Dear Representative/Senator:

The Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities (AJCU) stands in solidarity and in prayer with those families who have lost loved ones or experienced trauma due to gun violence. On average, more than 120 Americans are killed by guns every day; as of June 22, 2022, more than 20,000 deaths in the United States have been attributed to guns (murders, suicide and unintentional) this year alone. In cities and towns like Buffalo, Uvalde and others, too many lives have been cut short because of this national plague. Overall, Americans are killed by guns at 22 times the rate of European Union citizens.

The leaders of Jesuit colleges and universities are encouraged that Senate leadership has been able to develop a bipartisan gun safety agreement that will contribute toward safeguarding the well-being of our communities, including those surrounding college and university campuses. While important, this legislation is only a first step: we, at AJCU, remain committed to advancing additional measures to protect the lives and health of Americans, and especially young people, from gun violence. Each human life lost is an affront to human dignity and the care we provide to every person.

At Jesuit colleges and universities, our work is grounded in the promotion of a faith that does justice and the care of the whole person; we are committed to accompanying young people in the creation of a hope-filled and safe world to guarantee their future. A necessary pre-condition for our efforts to educate the next generation of civic leaders entails our students, faculty, and staff to enjoy physical safety on campus and off. It is worth noting that 2022 also marks the 15th anniversary of the Virginia Tech massacre: a vivid reminder to those of us in higher education that college campuses are not immune from this violence.

Pope Francis offers this guiding principle for us in leadership positions, "Every man, every woman who has to take up the service of government, must ask themselves two questions: 'Do I love my people in order to serve them better? Am I humble and do I listen to everybody, to diverse opinions in order to choose the best path?'" If we do not ask ourselves these simple questions we are bound to fail in our duty as civic leaders.

We applaud the Senate's action to date and urge Congress to pass this bi-partisan legislation swiftly. Each of us must put the safety and wellbeing of citizens first by demanding and enacting sensible gun safety measures. If we believe that God is in everyone, we can do no less.

Sincerely,



Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J.
President

Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities

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CANISIUS COLLEGE, NY
COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS, MA
CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY, NE
FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY, CT
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GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY, DC
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY, WA
JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY, OH
LE MOYNE COLLEGE, NY
LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY, CA
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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY MARYLAND, MD
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